MAY 1958

COMMENTARY

The Continuing American Ideal — ROBERT GORHAM DAVIS

How Democratic Is Christian Democracy? — H. STUART HUGHES

Bombing in Nashville — JACKSON TOBY

Faith as the Leap of Action — JAKOB J. PETUCHOWSKI

Three Poems — DELMORE SCHWARTZ

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For His Father—A Poem — WILLIAM S. POSTER

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Behold the Key—A Story — BERNARD MALAMUD

Genesis—A Poem — JAMES DICKEY

Cedars of Lebanon
An Interview with Moses Mendelssohn

The Study of Man
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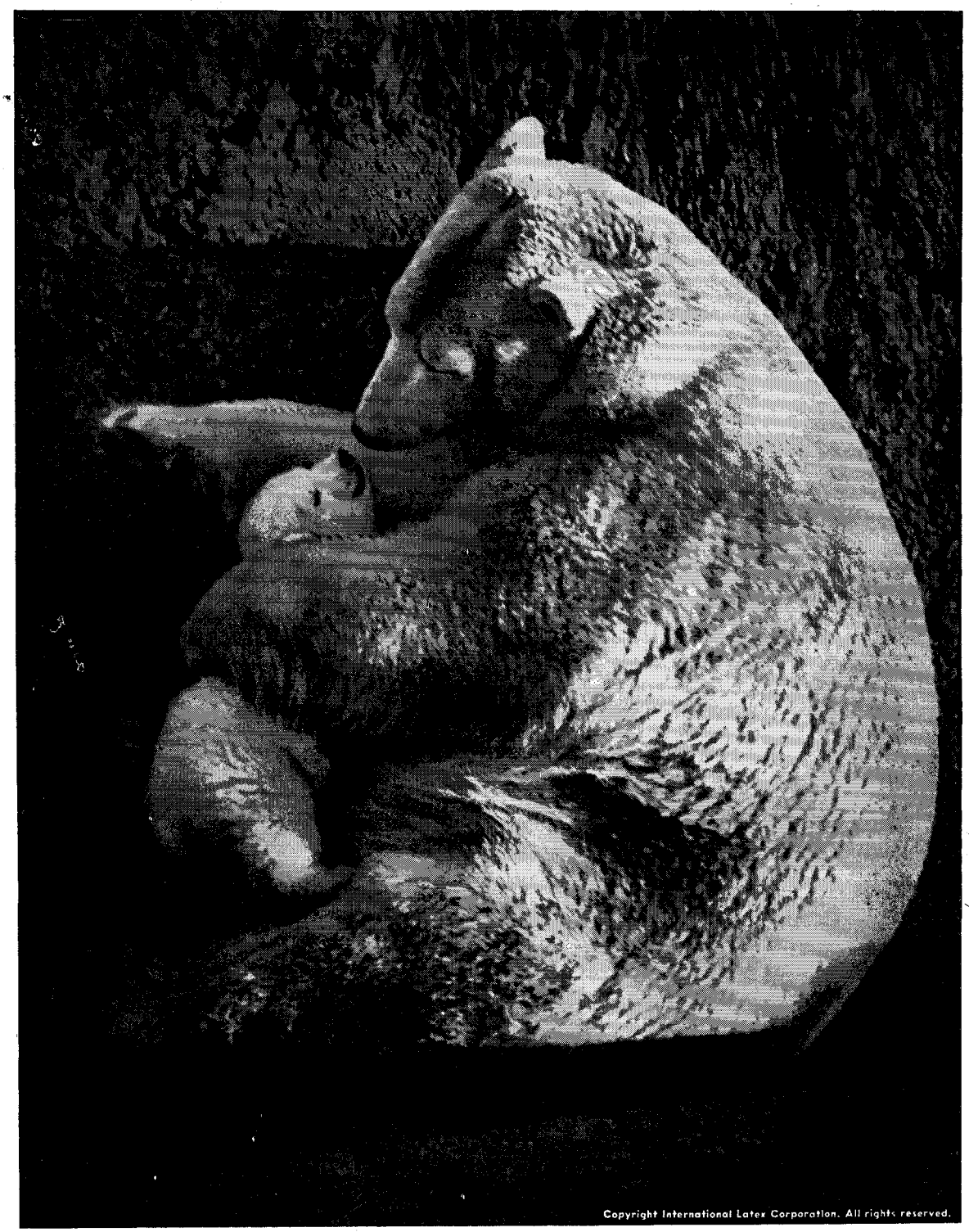

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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

COMMENTARY

What to Do About the Recession *Robert Lekachman*

All sorts of panaceas and programs are being offered with which to combat the current recession, and the layman may be forgiven for feeling bafflement in the face of so much conflicting expert counsel. A review of what the economists are advising, by a historian of economic thought.

Soviet Science *Leopold Labedz*

The USSR's scientific and technological progress in recent years has focused attention on its educational system. At the same time there appears to be a serious lag in the development of the social sciences in Russia, and a generally low level in philosophy. The subject is examined by a Polish-born sociologist resident in England.

The Mood of the American People *Harold Lavine*

How is the American citizenry reacting to the various problems that face us here and abroad? What is the mood of the country at this critical juncture in world history? A seasoned political observer appraises the scene.

A Goodly Tree *Erich and Raël Isaacs*

The curious history of the *etrog,* an exotic citrus fruit, whose ritual use on the festival of Succoth has compelled Jews throughout the ages to cast far and wide for an adequate supply.

America and the Leopold-Loeb Case *Leslie A. Fiedler*

In the history of the attitudes taken by various groups in American culture toward the Leopold-Loeb case, Mr. Fiedler finds a significant pattern of changing ideas about guilt and moral responsibility.

De-Stalinization Today *Richard Lowenthal*

Khrushchev, like Stalin, is now Premier as well as Party Secretary, and the recent course of his policy seems to have dashed the hopes of most who took "de-Stalinization" to mean larger freedom. Has Khrushchev achieved stabilization or has he left critical internal tensions unresolved?

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COMMENTARY

THE CONTINUING AMERICAN IDEAL

How Plural Is Our Culture?

ROBERT GORHAM DAVIS

THIS last fall I found myself reading, with a new kind of interest, an article which Randolph Bourne had published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in July 1916. It was called "Trans-National America." Written at a time of war, and just after the great flood of immigration to this country, it was an answer to those who were then talking excitedly about "hyphenated Americanism" and the "melting pot." Bourne disagreed with the assumptions of those who found these phrases so compelling. He was strongly in favor of hyphenated Americanism, especially in cultural matters, and he was strongly opposed to the whole idea of assimilation and the melting pot.

I had returned to Bourne's essay, after some twenty years, because I was writing a little book on America to be used by foreigners coming to this country to study. In it I naturally intended to discuss the pluralism, the heterogeneity, the "openness" of American culture. Bourne's argument, at first, seemed very much to my purpose.

"With the exception of the South," Bourne wrote, "and that New England which, like the Red Indian, seems to be passing into solemn oblivion, there is no distinctively American culture." Even the culture of New England and the South, Bourne said, represents Anglo-Americanism, and is just as hyphenated, therefore, as German-Americanism or Italian-Americanism. The new immigrants cannot really be assimilated to the culture of old New England or the Old South. The melting pot, if it works, simply dissolves their former cultures without giving them a new one.

"It is not the Jew who sticks proudly to the faith of his fathers and boasts of that venerable culture of his who is dangerous to America, but the Jew who has lost the Jewish fire and become a mere elementary grasping animal. It is not the Bohemian who supports the Bohemian schools in Chicago whose influence is sinister, but the Bohemian who has made money and has got into ward politics. Just so surely as we tend to disintegrate those nuclei of nationalistic culture do we tend to create hordes of men and women without a spiritual country, cultural outlaws, without standards but those of the mob. We sentence them to live on the most rudimentary planes. . . ."

ROBERT GORHAM DAVIS, a native of New England and a professor of English at Smith College, has been spending the current academic year in New York City, as a visiting professor at Columbia University. It is out of this experience of living for the first time in America's most heterogeneous city that the present article has been written. Mr. Davis's essays and reviews have appeared in a great many periodicals, including COMMENTARY.

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Immigrants should cultivate even more assiduously than they do the literature and cultural traditions of their homeland. "As long," Bourne wrote, "as we thought of Americanism in terms of the 'melting pot,' our American cultural tradition lay in the past. It was something to which new Americans were to be moulded. In the light of our changing ideal of Americanism, we must perpetuate the paradox that our American cultural tradition lies in the future. . . . America shall be what the immigrants will have a hand in making it, and not what a ruling class, descendants of those British stocks which were the first permanent immigrants, decide that America shall be."

Anyone now teaching American literature in an American college, more than four decades after Bourne wrote, knows how very wrong his prophecy seems to have been. I felt this particularly strongly because I read Bourne's essay this year just after I had come to teach American literature at Columbia University. Bourne was an undergraduate at Columbia, and its faculty now includes some of those American critics and scholars who have been most influential in defining American culture in ways dramatically different from those which Bourne predicted.

The discrepancy was also striking to me because I was having my first experience of actually living in New York City. This came after fourteen years spent mostly in Northampton, Massachusetts, the home, during their early maturity, of Jonathan Edwards, George Bancroft, and Calvin Coolidge. Despite the French-Canadian names above the stores, and the Polish spoken in the streets by tobacco farmers, it is not difficult to feel in Northampton the still living presence of a very American or New English past. It is even easier across the river in Amherst, where the Dickinson houses remain unchanged, and where Robert Frost still teaches for part of the academic year.

When I came to New York in September, I walked a good deal through the streets of the upper West Side. Amsterdam Avenue is rather different from the Smith or Amherst campus. How much did all these people swarming past me in the hot early evenings know of the formulae we use so glibly in explaining America to foreigners? How often did they consult the *Federalist Papers* or *The Golden Bowl*? Had they ever been to a town meeting in Brunswick, Maine, where the editor of the *New England Quarterly* is town moderator?

I walked from Broadway along 112th Street to the river. Two policemen left a squad car to talk to a rather disorderly group who were, as it happened, Negroes. When I paused, a man beside me pointed and said, "Look at them. This used to be a good district before we sold out to the Communists."

"I didn't realize that we had sold out to the Communists," I said.

"Yes," he said darkly, "we've sold out to the Communists. You talk to the authorities downtown, and you'll find out."

I opened my mouth confidently, but no words came. We were two Americans, two single, simple, separate selves out of Emerson or Whitman, and I had nothing to say to him, no bridge by which I could cross to him. What aggregate were we part of? Was there nothing organic in our culture to give us living rapport? He wandered off and sat down under a huge statue of Samuel J. Tilden. On its base was deeply engraved, "I trust the people."

By us went a little Puerto Rican boy with Indian features, speaking Spanish to his mother. Across the back of his T-shirt was the name of Davy Crockett, martyr of the Alamo.

I was thoughtful, but not less optimistic about America than Walt Whitman, writing his *Democratic Vistas* in the time of Samuel J. Tilden, a railroad lawyer, or than James Russell Lowell, writing his *Bigelow Papers* against the war which Davy Crockett and his kind helped to start.

THE majority of the American people do not believe in civil liberties as defined in the amendments to the Constitution; their political information comes from the New York *Daily News* or the Chicago *Tribune*,

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their culture from the television set and *True Crime Detective Magazine*. My street-corner xenophobe has one vote the same as I. How precarious the situation of our traditional politics and culture must seem if they must be entrusted to such people!

But actually American democracy is not a simple aggregate, and the majority does not rule by sheer weight. Our society is highly conservative and traditional; its culture is in the directive charge of a self-selecting minority in government, in education, and in the voluntary organizations. This minority as often opposes the tastes and attitudes of the majority as reflects them, yet somehow manages to prevail or at least to retain its position of leadership.

The political and social reasons for this situation are complex and interesting, but not within the province of this article. I mention them, though, for it seems to me that the most extreme and pure effort to maintain this conservative and traditional culture—still peculiarly Anglo-American and Protestant-Puritan—is exhibited in the universities and colleges in the teaching of American literature. Here the contrast with what Bourne predicted is most complete.

"Trans-National America" is not an important essay in itself, of course. Bourne was, however, perhaps the first intellectual in America deliberately to make himself, while young, the spokesman for a rebelling younger generation. Van Wyck Brooks wrote that Bourne's was "one of the fullest, richest and most significant lives" of his time. It is worth noting that Bourne, as Brooks said, "discovered himself at Columbia where so many strains of the newer immigrant population meet one another in the full flood and ferment of modern ideas."

Bourne's reputation remained strong in the 20's, a decade of free creativity. In this period of revolt against Puritanism and the genteel tradition, many of Bourne's prophecies seemed to be coming to fulfillment. So did they in another way during the 30's, when the emphasis was even more on the future, on the remaking of America and society generally. In this reconstruction, imaginative writers were to play, so many of them fondly believed, a leading role.

Now in the prolonged reaction against the 30's—and I do not use the word *reaction* in any necessarily unfavorable sense—the prevailing approach to American literature and in the critical quarterlies seems to me in complete contradiction of Bourne's views. If this is so, it is significant, for what Bourne said of the new America is what we still say semi-officially when we are trying to define the character of American society or the American "mind," and to distinguish ourselves from Europeans.

WE STILL say that Americans are more concerned with the future than with the past, that ours is an open, pluralistic society, and that it has entered a phase in which the Anglo-American Puritan or "inner-directed" character no longer dominates, or even counts very much except as a picturesque survival. Americans are said to seem always to be starting over again, as if there were no past, or as if the chief virtue were to be free of it.

But the younger university historians—as for example Daniel J. Boorstin in *The Genius of American Politics*—like to assert the opposite. This country, they say, has been very stable politically. Our past is very much with us, and we are constantly consulting it. Ours is a government, we keep repeating, of laws and not men. Lawyers have always figured largely in American public affairs. But law depends on precedent. The very explicit colonial charters, in several instances, became by orderly processes the state constitutions. A number of American states, both North and South, have enjoyed uninterrupted legal government for three centuries.

Foreign visitors to America, whether in 1760 or 1910, have listed an unchanging group of traits as characteristically American. In establishing the American character a principle of primogeniture operated. Though America may seem always to be starting over, those who did the first starting had the greatest influence. The earliest

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comers had lasting advantage in land ownership, political power, control of education, and familiarity with the country. Increasingly they had the advantage of language, of speaking English, too.

The later comers, since they had come voluntarily, accepted the new country and the culture of the earlier comers, accepted the assimilation of their children in the public schools. The development and expansion of the free public school system coincided with the increasing influx of immigrants from non-English-speaking countries. Even when the later immigrants began to struggle for economic and political power against the earlier ruling groups, they did not reject the concept of Americanism which these predecessors had established. In fact, they used it in demanding their rights, just as the 18th-century Americans had fought the Revolution in the name of traditional British liberties granted them in their original charters.

THE influence in the national government of descendants of the earlier immigrants continues to show the advantage of priority. Such persistence has been even more pervasive in education and imaginative literature.

Long after the center of political and economic influence had shifted elsewhere, Massachusetts—or perhaps New England—kept a position of literary, educational, and moral leadership. In 1948, in his essay "The Americanism of Van Wyck Brooks," Frederick Dupee wrote that "New England has given to the United States its most literate body of native tradition, and educated Americans, regardless of their particular backgrounds, are always tending to become spiritual New Englanders. If the Yankee tradition is no longer very much alive, so much the worse for educated Americans." Three years ago, in the *New England Quarterly*, George Wilson Pierson of Yale published an article, "The Obstinate Concept of New England," which is, in effect, an expansion of this statement by Dupee.

More recently, with the writing of Faulkner, Warren, Tate, Welty, Capote, McCullers, and so many others, imaginative creativity has seemed to center in the South. Bourne had described the South as still an English colony, stagnant because it had not been able to profit from the stimulation, the cross-fertilization, of continuing immigration. In lectures delivered at the University of Virginia in 1935, and published under the title *After Strange Gods*, T. S. Eliot attributed the excellence of modern Southern literature to these very circumstances, to the homogeneity of the South, its strong sense of the past, and the comparatively small influx of immigrants since the 18th century.

Certainly as the flood of newcomers from Central and Eastern Europe poured into other sections than the South, more and more conscious use was made of the past in the effort to assimilate, Americanize, and control them. The more numerous and heterogeneous the immigrants, the more unified and historically minded became the official and academic culture. This is very entertainingly described in an important work of historiography by W. F. Craven, *The Legend of the Founding Fathers*. Through genealogical and ancestral societies and through increasingly popular centennials and architectural restorations, descendants of earlier immigrations sought to strengthen their position by genetic and imaginative identification with the past.

Often this effort was ill-conceived and showed little understanding of the English political tradition closest to our own, the tradition of Milton, Locke, and John Stuart Mill. But even where the motives were reactionary, as in the case of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the evoked past was commonly described in terms ritualized earlier in election-day sermons and Fourth of July oratory. The rhetoric employed was libertarian.

In this conscious 19th- and early 20th-century attempt to keep America American, stress was put on America's distinctive virtues, its newness, its love of enterprise, its legally insured freedoms, its morality, its superiority to Europe. In a country which

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lacked a monarchy, an established church, and poetic folk customs, which lacked all the visible stimulants to the historic sense listed in Henry James's essay on Hawthorne, the deliberate re-living in imagination of the experiences of the first colonists and the Founding Fathers had a unique kind of piety. So did attachment to documents like the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

It is not merely that we are influenced or warned by what happened in the past. American history as a whole is conceived as the carrier and creator of those qualities that give us identity as Americans. Especially in the treatment of literature, as I shall show, that identity, the complex fate of being an American, has become of more and more importance. Some writers go so far toward a mystic unity outside time as to make us in the present as much responsible for the past, as the past is for us. The guilt of the slave-holders and Indian fighters is our guilt, too. This is partly a result of having to face up to the whole character of American experience in defending America against critics abroad. It is partly a result of the peculiarly American feeling that being an American is an act of will or choice, that as soon as you say, "I am an American," as a way of defining yourself, then you take on moral responsibility for what America has been.

Such feeling is evident when we treat the Civil War in Sophoclean terms as a great unavoidable national tragedy. Is there any cultural phenomenon elsewhere quite like our vast literature, fictional and historical, on the Civil War? It is an obsession which shows no signs of abating. Yet it is not partisan or tendentious in character. Many of those writing about the Civil War and earlier periods are of second- and third-generation immigrant families. This is the case with some of the most distinguished younger American historians and literary critics. They are absorbed in a past which is theirs nationally but not genealogically. Yet it is more theirs than the DAR's because they conceive it more truly and identify themselves with it more completely. Speaking of an earlier America, they use quite properly the terms "we" and "our ancestors," though their literal ancestors at that time were in Russia or Germany or Italy. They know two Americas, and their whole effort is to unite them. There is the recent America, the America they were born to, and an earlier America which they make theirs by a conscious act of will and choice, as their fathers or grandfathers did before them by emigrating. The Puerto Rican boy with Davy Crockett on his back will probably write his dissertation on Emily Dickinson rather than on Puerto Rican nationalism or the Spanish colonial Catholic Church.

This effort to create national identity is beset by contradictions, of course. We find ourselves as Americans by seeing ourselves imaged in a kind of past which—in the character we give it, at least—is largely denied by the material and social circumstances in which we live. It is not only in advertisements in the *Ladies Home Journal*, or in Norman Rockwell's wartime Four Freedoms posters, that we find American values suggested by ways of life which are anachronistic or confined to a particular minority in a nation of minorities. Much the same tendency is to be found, for instance, in the poems of Robert Frost, the only major poet of this period whose poems are heard with pleasure both by laymen and scholars, both by the un-critical and critical alike.

Emerson had said that "the vast majority of the people of this country live by the land and carry its quality in their manners and opinions." Frost's opinions and the imagery which expresses them—his valuational symbols—take their quality from the life of isolated New England farms. But mountain farms ceased being characteristic —or at least economically profitable—in New England before the end of Emerson's own lifetime. Frost's formative years as a boy were spent in San Francisco, and though he owned farms after he grew up and began writing, he never really lived by the land,

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as he slyly admits in "New Hampshire."

Similarly retrospective is the work of William Faulkner, the contemporary novelist most admired in the universities. In his romantic use of the wilderness theme—"The Bear" is a good example—Faulkner describes the stages by which the forest, once the domain of free hunters, is lumbered, reduced to farmland, to towns, to the suburbs of cities. In *The Sound and the Fury*, Benjy's pasture is sold for a golf course. This is the American story, but it is a story of steady retrocession, vulgarization, debasement.

Faulkner is not the first to view America so. The persistence of such criticism is in itself a sign of continuity and consensus. When Frost was a boy—or a young man, actually—Mark Twain and Henry Adams were gloomily contrasting the America of the end of the century with the pre-Civil War America of their youth. But in that golden day, when Adams and Sam Clemens were young, James Fenimore Cooper was recalling with regret the principled republicanism, the agrarian or democratic aristocracy, of his pre-Jacksonian, pre-Whig childhood.

Cooper's Natty Bumppo is driven deeper into the forest by the sound of the settlers' axes. Writing of Cooper's *The Prairie*, published in 1827, Richard Chase says, "Squatters like the Bush family are the real villains, for underneath the colorful barbarism of their appearance, they are mean-minded materialists, and have no trace of reverence for nature or man. The old trapper sadly watches them with exactly the same feelings aroused in Faulkner's Ike McCaslin by people like the Snopes family."

This quotation, with its phrase "exactly the same," suggests a current approach to American literature almost completely opposite to the one which Randolph Bourne expected to see develop in a poly-ethnic, multi-national America. The emphasis in all our literary studies, of course, is on great books, exhaustively analyzed with all the rich awareness that the new criticism and new scholarship (William Empson, Cleanth Brooks, Northrop Fry, Maud Bodkin, G. Wilson Knight) have enabled us to bring to them. In its treatment of American literature and the American past, academic criticism is increasingly centripetal, homogeneous, stable, and unified, and tends to make over in its own image some of the work it evaluates. In American studies the best critics have published a long series of critical works —I shall name some of them below—analyzing the same small group of writers over and over again: Cooper, Hawthorne, Melville, Emerson, Whitman, Henry James, Emily Dickinson, Mark Twain, Scott Fitzgerald, Faulkner. Again and again the same dozen major American works are compared and contrasted, in critical treatises of great maturity and perception. The critics, moreover, respect each other, go to meetings with each other, learn from each other. The canon of works to be analyzed and the terms in which they are to be praised become more and more agreed upon. A sort of interpretative cocoon is woven, binding the American masterpieces into a single living body.

Guiding concepts are those of the American Adam before and after he had eaten of the forbidden tree, of the Puritan mind confronted by the frontier, and of the dialectic of innocence and experience, as variously represented in James's *Daisy Miller* or Warren's *Brother To Dragons*. Since the tendency is centripetal and unitary, the emphasis is on qualities which persist and which bring together or identify the creations of different periods.

In Richard Lewis's *The American Adam*, an excellent book which admirably represents the tendency I am describing, the hero of Faulkner's "The Bear" is described as Natty Bumppo "recreated by the dark energies of a Hawthorne." Richard Chase, discussing *The Great Gatsby*, says that Fitzgerald's hero is not only of the company of Benjamin Franklin or Poor Richard, but also of Natty Bumppo, Huck Finn, and Melville's Ishmael. "For although he is treated with more irony than they, as befits a later worldliness, he shares their ideal of innocence, escape, and the purely personal code of conduct. Like them he derives his

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values not from the way of the world, but from an earlier pastoral ideal."

In this pattern, Puritanism, which writers were so busily exorcising in the 20's, remains ineradicable and even determinative. American authors are judged according to the ways in which they have accepted, transformed, or reacted against Puritan modes of thought and moral commitment. Perhaps I should say rather "Calvinist" than "Puritan," since the New Yorker, Melville, is also in question here. Lawrance Thompson says in *Melville's Quarrel with God* that Melville as a youth encountered a Dutch Calvinist Protestantism almost unchanged since the 16th century. In *The Literary History of the United States,* Dixon Wecter speaks of Mark Twain as struggling all his life with his Calvinist heritage. It emerged, in an inverted way, in the pessimistic determinism of his later works. In a recent issue of the *New England Quarterly* appeared an article characteristically entitled "The Calvinist Burden of Faulkner's *Light in August.*"

All scholarship, of course, is concerned with the past, but American literary scholarship concentrates on unchanging or persisting qualities which are peculiarly American—or taken to be so. Since the emphasis is not on change, as it was in the 20's and 30's, and since we no longer hear much about the dynamics of history where literature is being discussed, speculation about the literary future is not encouraged.

Though colleges abound in creative writing courses, which presumably contain the makers of our future imaginative literature, they are carefully fenced off from the courses in the history of American literature. Most teachers of American literature would be embarrassed by questions about the future direction of American writing, and they would be strongly opposed to taking any hortatory attitude toward that future. They would not think of urging young writers to try to define themselves as Americans in any particular way in their writing, or to act as the evangels of a new spirit.

We have come very far from the Herderesque conception of the writer's role, though it was strong both in the 1830's and 1930's in this country, and though Whitman returned to it in a rather abstract and unconvincing way in his *Democratic Vistas.* Whether the universities are right in leaving the future to itself is a debatable question. Certainly, however, so far as college teaching is concerned, Bourne was quite wrong in thinking that our preoccupation would be with the future rather than with the past, and that out of the future would emerge a quite new American culture, or rather a concert of national and ethnic cultures, gradually modifying each other. In this development he supposed that the old and—as he saw it—reactionary Anglo-American or Calvinist-Puritan tradition would play a very small role indeed.

Not only do academic studies of American literature emphasize the past and persistence rather than the future and change, but they are increasingly monistic, where Bourne looked forward to a liberating pluralism. Bourne is not the only one to see pluralism, heterogeneity, and openness as the distinctive character of American society. This is still the conventional way of describing it, as Max Lerner's recent book shows. But in defining our higher artistic culture, the fashion in literary studies is to discover homogeneity. Different critics and scholars do, of course, have different social and religious positions, and they assign different weights to different elements, but they agree remarkably about the works to be discussed and the values to be assigned to them. This is not a matter of pure literary appreciation —if there is such a thing. It is a matter of the particular *American-ness* of the literature admired.

The word *American* seems to create no problem when it is used merely to label a course in American literature, i.e. literature written in America, as opposed to English or French literature. Teachers yield, however, to the temptation to make proper names connotative as well as denotative, substantive as well as adjectival. There is obvious satis-

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faction in finding that the word *American* refers not to indefinable heterogeneity but to a persisting, self-subsistent myth or character or *Geist* or soul, or to a complex of relationships between, say, power and dream or innocence and experience. These schemata are not only carried in the great works of the American imagination, but provide norms by which they and others may be judged.

The word *American* has been used in this way to apply to our literature generally, to individual authors, and to individual characters in these authors' works. A long list of titles containing the word *American* comes readily to mind. The following examples illustrate the different degrees of weight given the term: Van Wyck Brooks's *America's Coming of Age* and *Three Essays on America;* Constance Rourke's *American Humor: A Study of the National Character;* Ludwig Lewisohn's *Expression in America;* Bernard De Voto's *Mark Twain's America;* Philip Horton's *Hart Crane: The Life of an American Poet;* F. O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance;* Quentin Anderson's *The American Henry James;* Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth;* and R. W. B. Lewis's *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the 19th Century.* One of the most influential essays in Lionel Trilling's *The Liberal Imagination* is called "Reality in America." It is of crucial importance for understanding the tendency I am describing.

In 1934, Marianne Moore wrote an article on "Henry James as a Characteristic American." She quoted him as saying, "Culture, as I hold, is a matter of attitude quite as much as opportunity; one's supreme relation, as one had always put it, was one's relation to one's country."

Though students, under the influence of the New Criticism, were attracted to James because of his formal mastery of his art, they found that they had to come to grips with the theme of nationality. In nearly every novel by James, America and Americans were defining themselves as better or worse than Europe and Europeans, but always as distinct and different. In his essay on Hawthorne, James provided many of the terms which enable contemporary critics to conceive the American experience as integral. Earlier in this article I spoke of the imaginative preoccupation with the Civil War. James wrote in the Hawthorne essay that "the Civil War marks an era in the history of the American mind. . . . The good American, in days to come, will be a more critical person than his complacent and confident grandfather. He has eaten of the tree of knowledge." American criticism would be lost without images of the garden and the fall. There is much emphasis on the Old Testament and man's quarrel with God, very little on Christ and salvation. The spirit is Protestant and even Hebraic.

Both in his criticism and his fiction James referred in the singular to *the* American. "The gentleman on the divan," he wrote at the beginning of a novel called *The American,* "was the superlative American." The characters of many other writers are also found by critics to represent America as a whole. Of Willa Cather's *My Antonia* Van Wyck Brooks wrote, "The book is greater than any mere transcription from life because the leading character, in the words of the narrator, 'stood for the country, the conditions, the whole adventure of our childhood.'" Of Fitzgerald's hero Lionel Trilling wrote, "Gatsby is said by some to be not credible, but the question of any literal credibility he may or may not have becomes trivial before the larger significance he implies. For Gatsby, divided between power and dream, comes inevitably to stand for America itself."

RECENT writers on American literature seem to need the stabilizing and unifying effect of a particularist American literary tradition. Sophisticated critics like Henry Nash Smith and Richard Lewis make James Fenimore Cooper a primary figure, though they are well aware of his weaknesses as a writer. "No less than half a dozen of Cooper's novels," Lewis writes, "possess an amount of indestructible power: something

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we answer to even before we have spotted it; some image of experience we know to be fundamentally our own, or at least could wish that it were."

Who is the *we* here? Is it Everyman, or Every Man in America? Does it apply to someone not of American birth who has merely lived here a while, like Auden or Thomas Mann or the little Puerto Rican boy? Can James Jones and Ayn Rand recognize their identification with Cooper's images of experience, or is being a *we* person —as in Carson McCullers' *Member of the Wedding*—something which has to be won through insight and love, and reading the right books in the right spirit?

On the very first page of *The American Adam,* Lewis speaks of *the* American myth, and says later, after mentioning *The Marble Faun, Billy Budd,* and *The Golden Bowl,* "Those novels were perhaps as close as American culture ever came to the full and conscious realization of the myth it had so long secreted." Richard Chase names these same novelists, Hawthorne, Melville, and James, and adds to them the poet Whitman. Quentin Anderson also lists Hawthorne, Melville, and James, and says, "These three had to find elements in the common life of living Americans, and in the American past, which might serve as symbols of extensive reference. They chose with astonishing perspicacity, and though the very attempt to find such things on one's own hook may appear desperate . . . , the record persuades me that their choices were not arbitrary. They made plain what was in the lives of other Americans obscure; and *what* they made plain turned out to be important to all Americans who were in the least exercised about their heritage and its preservation."

Lewis quotes D. H. Lawrence as saying of Natty Bumppo that he represented "the essential American soul . . . an isolate, almost selfless, stoic, enduring man." Americanist critics frequently quote D. H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature* because it is so congenial to the tendency I have been describing, and helped to establish the canon of genuinely American works. On the other hand, Lawrence is much more romantic, much more in the spirit of the 20's than these later academic critics. In the American classics he found a conflict between manifest content, which often represents the semi-official democratic culture, and the latent content, the distinctive unconscious self of America, which is struggling to create a new morality, a new wholeness.

THE word new is as much a key term at the beginning of Lawrence's *Studies* as it is at the beginning of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, "a new nation," or in Crêvecoeur's *Letters of an American Farmer,* "that new man, the American." Most European interpreters have been as eager as Americans themselves to grant America distinctiveness of culture or soul, though they often do it in an unfriendly or condescending way. One of the most extreme examples is to be found in the work of Carl Jung. It was perpetrated at a time when racism was in vogue.

"The American," Jung wrote, "is a European with the manners of a Negro and the soul of an Indian. . . . That peculiar walk, loose-limbed, those swaying hips, observed so frequently among American women, are of Negro origin." Our way of talking and laughing, according to Jung, can "hardly be traced back to a Germanic ancestry; it resembles more the 'chattering' of the Negro village," as does the "almost total absence of intimacy and the overwhelming mass-sociability of the Americans." Since American Protestants did not intermarry with the Indians as did the Spaniards, our Indian souls could not come through the blood. This creates no difficulty, however. The separateness—to quote Jung again—could not prevent "the soul of their Indian foes from becoming their own. It is everywhere within the power of the virgin earth to bring down at last the unconscious of the conquerer."

This is absurd, of course. But the willed creation of a distinctive American literary tradition by the American critics I have cited is not absurd. The writers with whom

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they principally deal *are* our best writers, and the qualities which they find in their works—even though selectively and tendentiously—are actually there. The critics themselves, moreover, are highly sensitive to peculiarly literary qualities and thoroughly informed about American literature in general. This gives great weight to their normative, stabilizing definition of the meaning of *American*, found in just that Anglo-American Puritan tradition which Bourne thought to be moribund over forty years ago.

WHETHER it is good that we should be so consciously American and separatist and retrospective in our approach to American literature is a question, of course. It seems to satisfy a need for homogeneity and identification with the past which is especially strong in a people of such recently diverse origins, and which is not satisfied by our other institutions.

Certainly this tendency would not be good if it kept us from appreciating Proust or understanding Indonesian nationalism or realizing how much American social and cultural development has had in common with that of Europe. But in the colleges, at least, our approach is not nationalist in a bad sense. It is highly self-critical; the writers it makes central were themselves, in various ways, alienated men. They quarreled with God, with America, with their egos.

So persistent have many American traits been that an enlightened study of the past is a salutary way of seeing our present selves —especially our popular, democratic self— in perspective. Scholars of American history do not admire Davy Crockett. Quite the contrary; but for good and bad, in his speech, his deeds, his vulgarity, Davy Crockett is still very much with us. Hamlin Garland spoke of the callous jocosity—only too typical of the frontier—with which Crockett describes the killing of an Indian woman. I found it well to be reminded of that when I saw his name written across the T-shirt of the little Puerto Rican boy. Davy Crockett is still with us, and so is Jay Gatsby.

When we walk about the streets or study popular entertainment, we may feel that the definition of *American* I have been discussing is absurdly at variance with the social actualities—and with the morality—of contemporary American urban life. But literary schools, intellectual movements, cultural epochs, national qualities are not merely the direct reflection of external actualities. They result in part from the directive, selective consciousness of creative minorities. The persisting moral consciousness, over so long a period of time, of what it could mean to be an American—constantly discouraged by the actualities of democratic politics and mass culture—has shown a marvelous ability not only to sustain itself against that culture, but in the long run to guide it or set a standard for it. This is so because America is, after all, an idea, an act of will, a conscious choice.

In Robert Frost's "The Death of the Hired Man," the following exchange occurs:

"Home is the place where, when you have to go there,
They have to take you in."

"I should have called it
Something you somehow haven't to deserve."

It seems to me that there is a constant creative tension in our literature between America as home, as actuality, to be described and accepted for what it is, and America as an idea, a moral imagination, a judgment of the actuality. The second America is something which somehow you *do* have to deserve. You don't just inherit it. You have to master it, to will it, to choose, almost, to emigrate to it. It is held to be most readily discoverable in five or six novels of the last century.

Amazingly, in the realm of imagination and ideas, the second America has had as much strength as the first. Whether it can continue to have is another question.

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HOW DEMOCRATIC IS CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY?

The Church in European Politics

H. STUART HUGHES

THE appearance of a full-scale, comparative study of Christian Democratic movements in Western Europe from the early 19th century to the present should be an occasion for joy, not only to students of modern European history, but also to that wider circle of readers concerned for the future of democracy in our time. In any assessment of the political prospects for Western Europe, Christian Democracy necessarily takes a central place. Its present prominence offers the great ideological novelty of the postwar era—considerably more of a novelty, indeed, than the strength of Communism, which was already anticipated in the inter-war period. The fact that political parties inspired by Christian principles currently hold more than a third of the seats in the lower houses of Western and Central European parliaments—and that a *majority* of those deputies loyal to the Western concept of liberty call themselves Christian Democrats—suggests the extent of this postwar growth. A wide-ranging scholarly study of the phenomenon of Christian Democracy has long been required.

One would like to say that Professor Michael P. Fogarty's *Christian Democracy in Western Europe, 1820-1953** fills the gap. It is detailed and learned. It has breadth and sweep. It makes heroic efforts at objectivity. Its style, while neither lively nor distinguished, is adequate to convey its message. Above all, it is so evidently inspired by a spirit of robust no-nonsense and a yearning for human fellowship that it seems churlish to criticize it, even in detail. It is an estimable work—and estimable works are often the most difficult to assess with any degree of fairness.

Initially let me say that whatever its eventual—and largely implicit—weaknesses, Professor Fogarty's book is eminently worth reading. Not only does it convey all sorts of out-of-the-way information. It is the first important book, so far as I know, to concentrate on Christian Democracy's social and economic organizations rather than on its more obvious political structures. "People in the Anglo-Saxon countries," the author notes in his preface, "have a way of being blinded by the parties and forgetting the social movements and the movements of Christian Action: that weightier part of the iceberg which lies for the most part below the vision of the British or American press." It is his aim to correct this imbalance: the greater part of his book is concerned with the trade unions and the family and youth organizations that give contemporary Christian Democracy its enormously varied character. And these, he observes, are stronger in countries like Belgium and France, where the Christian Democratic political parties are relatively weak, than in Germany and Italy, where the latter actually govern the state.

A second noteworthy feature of Professor Fogarty's work is the attention it devotes to Protestantism. Here again he is trying to rectify a previous disproportion in emphasis. Although a Catholic himself, he is unhappy about the almost universal tendency—even among Protestants—to treat Christian De-

H. STUART HUGHES is professor of history at Harvard and a regular contributor to COMMENTARY, his most recent article appearing in the March 1958 number. He is the author of *Oswald Spengler* (1952) and *The United States and Italy* (1953), and has just completed a history of European thought from 1890 to 1930.

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mocracy as a Catholic phenomenon. In our newspaper reading we are occasionally made aware of the fact that Chancellor Adenauer's party has a large Protestant wing. But we are considerably less familiar with the widely ramifying Protestant organizations in a country like the Netherlands—the only nation on the Western European continent with a large non-Catholic majority. Through his sympathetic analysis of Protestant social action, Professor Fogarty has made a real contribution to understanding between the two faiths. And he has exploited in imaginative fashion his unusual personal vantage point as a British social scientist with close Catholic connections on the Continent who is currently teaching in militantly Evangelical Wales.

Indeed, it is this recognition of the Protestant contribution to Christian Democratic thought and action that leads him to the most novel generalization his work affords. In scanning the statistics of religious practice among the populations of Western and Central Europe, Professor Fogarty began to discern a "sort of heartland of European Christianity" stretching "from Flanders to Venice" and including within it the Low Countries, the French and German borderlands, Austria, Switzerland, and parts of northern Italy. In the frontier areas in particular, he discovered, national and religious differences seemed to reinforce each other: where Protestants and Catholics lived close together, both were strong in their faith. Hence it was natural that he should have chosen to concentrate on these border regions of intense religious practice.

Such a non-sectarian definition of the religious heartland is sufficient in itself to suggest how far Professor Fogarty's book is from being a routine work of Catholic apologia. And it further suggests the ideological pluralism on which he insists as one of the basic tenets of Christian Democratic thinking. Indeed, the independence and permissiveness of Professor Fogarty's own attitude offer a third—and perhaps the most remarkable—of the strong points of his account. Although respectful of ecclesiastical authority, he is by no means a clerical—quite the contrary. Again and again he stresses the difficulties that have arisen when the clergy has interfered in the conduct of Christian Democratic policy. And he intimates unmistakably that the Catholic hierarchy ought to leave the Christian Democratic movements alone to direct their own affairs at their own discretion. In the same fashion he tells the clergy that it should not expect these laymen's movements to fight *all* the Church's battles for it: to Americans accustomed to think of a monolithic Catholic attitude on the question of state aid to religious education, it may come as a surprise to find Professor Fogarty arguing that in France, at least, this issue should "be left to the ecclesiastical authorities to negotiate as best they may, but be put, so far as Christian politicians are concerned, into cold storage."

Thus it is as a layman militantly conscious of the rights of the laity that Professor Fogarty argues his case. This is a most appealing attitude—and one that has grown increasingly rare in the past three or four generations. Traditionally, and down to the late 19th century, prominent Catholic laymen were accustomed to dispute the authority of the clergy not only on secular affairs, but even on matters of dogma. Today such an attitude—certainly in our own country—is almost unheard of. Since the Vatican Council of 1870 and the Papal condemnation of "Modernism" a generation later, the Catholic laity has grown understandably cautious. Nowadays almost nobody dares talk back to a cardinal or a bishop. In this context, Professor Fogarty's insistence on the "independent responsibility" of the laity for the sole conduct of Christian Democracy comes as a refreshing breath of courage from an almost forgotten past.

YET when all of the foregoing has been granted, I still have the impression of a great gap in the texture of Professor Fogarty's reasoning—that in some sense he has missed the main point. This is the major criticism that I should like to direct at his

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book. It seems to me that by simply leaving out of his account the implicit tension between the Christian tradition and the tradition of Continental European democracy, Professor Fogarty has subtly distorted, in ways that are not always immediately apparent, the whole sequence of historical events and of present-day relationships.

Professor Fogarty simply *assumes* the compatibility of Christianity and democracy. He does not argue it—he just begs the whole question. Historically, however, I think it is beyond dispute that democracy on the Western European continent grew up outside of and frequently in opposition to the tradition of organized Christianity. Things were quite different in Britain and in the United States—but it is not about these that Professor Fogarty is writing: he is concerned solely with the Continent. And here the characteristic democratic leadership has until comparatively recently been at the very least secular-minded, agnostic, or anti-clerical if not frankly anti-Christian—"humanist" (to use Professor Fogarty's own expression)—rather than religious in inclination.

In passing over or minimizing this traditional cleavage, Professor Fogarty derives full advantage from his concentration on the social as opposed to the political groupings of Christian Democracy. In the worthy endeavors of labor, youth, and family organizations, a kind of Boy Scout morality offers a convenient link between the mentality of the religious and that of the secular-oriented: where the major goals are tangible and precise, final philosophical issues may well remain obscure. In national politics it is otherwise. Here—again I am speaking only of the European continent—ideology is central: ultimately the great divisive issues cannot be denied.

Moreover, by focusing on social organizations at the expense of politics, Professor Fogarty accomplishes another feat of subtle readjustment. In youth and family groups Christian Democratic principles can appear in their "purest" and most attractive guise: in politics they reveal all the insufficiencies of practical and worldly compromise. Indeed, it is in the Christian Democratic political parties that one first discerns the enormous gap between principle and practice characteristic of movements of this sort. Here once again Professor Fogarty simply glides over the discrepancy. In his account, the distinction is never clarified between Christian Democracy as an ideal and Christian Democracy in its highly fallible political embodiments.

When one speaks of these embodiments, obviously one is thinking primarily of the two great parties that have governed Western Germany and Italy without interruption over the past decade. It is from the regimes established by Adenauer and De Gasperi that the public has derived its conception of what Christian Democracy is all about. In Professor Fogarty's terms of reference, this may be unfortunate. But it cannot be altered simply by a unilateral declaration that politics is a secondary matter in the Christian Democratic hierarchy of values.

By their position as virtual monopolists of governmental authority, the Christian Democratic parties of Germany and Italy have perforce been drastically altered in character. The consolidation of their situation as the exclusive wielders of administrative power has necessarily been at the expense of their traditional principles. Where these called for decentralization and "vertical pluralism," the actual conduct of government in Germany and Italy has emphasized central authority and the power of the state. In Italy in particular the governing party's conviction of its own indispensability in the struggle against Communism has served to justify a multitude of sins. The casuistry of practical expedience has condoned administrative arbitrariness, petty corruption, and the betrayal or watering-down of promised reforms. Again and again the party has revealed a guilty penchant for indirect censorship and thought control. And along with these there has gone a notable reinforcement of clerical influence.

All this Professor Fogarty would doubtless condemn as a lamentable perversion of the

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Christian Democratic ideal. But is it in fact a perversion? May it not equally well be regarded as a logical conclusion from Christian Democratic assumptions? The pure and permissive policy that Professor Fogarty prefers may be no more than a utopia—attainable in family and youth movements, perhaps, but impracticable in national politics. This second line of reasoning I should like to follow for a moment, taking my cue from Professor Fogarty's own *obiter dicta.*

I HAVE said that his main argument is a vigorous and ethically attractive plea for ideological pluralism. With this I have no quarrel—quite the contrary. Behind this major line of reasoning, however, the careful reader of Professor Fogarty's book can discern a second argument of a tougher sort, less obvious, less fully spelled out, hidden away in asides and apparent digressions. This second line of reasoning consists of straight theology—orthodox, authoritarian, and uncompromising.

Consider, for example, what Professor Fogarty has to say about Pius IX's insistence on temporal power and Papal infallibility and his root-and-branch condemnation of democratic and "humanist" thought. To most liberal Catholics these declarations of nearly a hundred years ago have been sources of grief and anxiety. To Professor Fogarty, on the contrary, they rank as mainsprings of Catholic strength. "A major source of . . . self-confidence and security for Catholic Christian Democrats," he affirms, "has been the consciousness of guidance and backing from a Church which maintains its authority and independence beyond challenge; and Pius IX's double stand, on the Temporal Power and Infallibility, is the classic reaffirmation of this authority and independence in the conditions of the modern world. It can thus be said in a very real sense that Pius IX's refusal to accept democracy as applied to himself opened the way for other Catholics to enter confidently into the democratic world."

This, I submit, is simply tortured reasoning and casuistry. And the same is true of Professor Fogarty's treatment of the Papal condemnation of "Modernism." Pius X's encyclical *Pascendi* of 1907—a kind of revised edition, nearly half a century later, of the Syllabus of Errors of 1864—has long been a stumbling block for liberal Catholics. And —again like the Syllabus—it has been much attenuated in its practical application over the past fifty years. I have the distinct impression that a large number of good Catholics today are in fact "Modernists"—in the sense that they interpret dogma as symbol, rather than in the literal terms on which Pius X insisted. For Professor Fogarty, however, this whole vast issue—the last great upset in world Catholicism before the present calm of uniformity settled upon it—seems to offer no serious embarrassment. Nowhere does he suggest any disagreement with the Pope's view or directly deal with the heresies of "Modernism." But he gently chides the early 20th-century Christian Democrats Marc Sangnier and Romolo Murri for their alleged sentimentality and "woolliness." This "woolliness" is never quite specified, and we are left wondering in what it consists—that is, until we learn that the movements led by Sangnier and Murri, for all their estimable idealism of motive, both fell afoul of the Papal condemnation of 1907.

One could multiply such examples indefinitely. But these, it may be objected, are of concern only to members of Professor Fogarty's own faith, and need not trouble the non-Catholic reader. Would that it were so. But in fact the dogmatic, uncompromising element in Professor Fogarty's work extends beyond the sphere of his own religion to threaten even his allies in the common cause of Christian Democracy. Earlier I noted that he has kind words for the Protestants. But this is only in his foreground argument. In his secondary line of reasoning a harsher view takes over. Protestantism, we learn, "has at times . . . forgotten . . . the relevance of Revelation." Indeed, Professor Fogarty implies, it has sometimes "denied the Faith or . . . part of it" and "fallen into formal error."

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If he can take so sectarian an attitude toward his fellow Christians, in a context that is, after all, social and political rather than religious, what treatment, we wonder, does Professor Fogarty reserve for agnostics and "humanists"? Here once again he does not deal with the question directly. He never says in so many words that "humanists" are in a state of radical error. But the implication is unmistakable. Again and again he notes the insufficiencies of "humanism"—for instance in questions concerning the "dynamic and autonomous" family, which, he tells us, "is almost exclusively a Christian and particularly a Catholic discovery." And it is with evident approval that he cites the Christian attitude of exercising "authority . . . in . . . matters of personal morality and social custom," as opposed to the "humanist'" insistence on leaving "this field . . . as nearly as possible free." In addition he treats us to a full-dress review of the Catholic stand on birth control ("The safe period method, simple abstention, or the dedicated charity of priests and nuns appear as—in that order—increasingly acceptable.") Once again, however, his conclusion is ambiguous "Where 'humanism' will lead," he warns, "is not clear. But a good many Christians are taking no risks."

Is this a declaration of war? I do not think it is quite that. But it is a transparent intimation that a good Catholic cannot trust a "humanist" very far. "There are few if any matters of politics or economics or social life of which Christian Democrats would say that Christianity allows them to see the truth clearly, whereas non-Christians cannot see it at all. . . . What Christian Democrats maintain is that their Christianity gives them an extra assurance, a certainty of touch, and a capacity for recognising and recovering from their mistakes which enables them to grasp and solve the problems of life more completely and competently than if they relied on human reason alone. At point after point, Revelation steps in. . . ."

Here at last we have come to the crux of Professor Fogarty's second and more subtle line of argument. "Human reason alone" cannot serve as an adequate guide to social and economic progress: those without benefit of Revelation are almost certain to falter somewhere along the road. And this impression that Christian principles give the only complete and satisfactory answer to our current dilemmas is confirmed when at the very end of his book Professor Fogarty suggests his own aspirations for the future. The Christian Democratic parties, he tells us—(note that he has imperceptibly shifted from social movements back to political parties)—have expanded very nearly as far as they can in the purely Christian constituency of Western Europe. The next task before them is to "break through" to the religiously tepid or agnostic. Only when these too have been enrolled under the banner of Christian Democracy will the future be secure. The final vista that Professor Fogarty opens up before us is of a vast Christian Democratic dominance—a monopoly of public activity even more inclusive than what obtains in Italy today.

In pursuing to its logical conclusion Professor Fogarty's second and less apparent line of argument, I have of necessity simplified it. But I do not think that I have distorted its underlying drift. In brief, the implication of this second chain of reasoning is that political parties are much more important than Professor Fogarty originally said they were, that state or party direction of morality is the logical corollary to orthodoxy in dogma, and that the Christian Democrat who becomes concerned with the overall government of society discovers himself to be rather more authoritarian than he realized when he was dealing with the family, the youth movement, or the trade union.

Or—to put it another way—the fact that Christian Democracy on its lower levels is so often ethically attractive and at its more exalted levels is correspondingly depressing is not merely an accident of circumstance. It is implicit, rather, in the underlying character of Christian Democracy itself. In its junior ranks Christian Democracy includes many of the most devoted younger activists

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that Western Europe currently affords—witness Professor Fogarty himself. At the top its leaders are all too often routine politicians—and sanctimonious ones to boot.

Why is this the case? Initially it is worth noting that in Christian Democracy, the second term of the title is merely instrumental to the first. A Christian Democrat is a Christian primarily, and a democrat only in a subordinate capacity. The adjective is more important than the noun. In Social Democracy it is just the reverse: the behavior of European Socialists during the past forty years has demonstrated that in their eyes the interests of democracy override those of socialism. In this second case, since both the terms of loyalty are purely terrestrial, a choice can be reached through a rational weighing of the relevant issues. For Christian Democrats, on the other hand, no real choice exists: since one term is spiritual and the other political, it is obvious which necessarily takes precedence.

It is for this reason that the behavior of Christian Democratic parties offers such a bewildering alternation of moral judgments and opportunist calculation, and why their behavior has been assessed so very differently by their apologists and by their detractors. For the former, the Christian Democrats are living examples of morality in action; for the latter, they shift their principles to every change in the political weather. And both evaluations are in one or another sense correct. Christian Democrats quite naturally feel called upon to make moral judgments in nearly every sphere of life—but since the criterion of these judgments is religious rather than political, a merely opportunist selection of political *means* to moral *ends* may at the same time appear perfectly permissible. Such is the more disquieting significance of that ideological flexibility in which, according to Professor Fogarty, the Christian Democrats take particular pride.

In a peaceful era, this discrepancy creates no serious difficulty. But in times of civil tension it may bring enormous political hazards. When religion itself appears threatened, the Christian Democrat is obliged to make a painful choice. To save his religious faith, he may be obliged to sacrifice his political principles—to preserve Christianity from godless revolution, he may feel it necessary to jettison democracy and have recourse to authoritarian government. This was the logic of the vote of full powers that the Christian Democratic parties of Italy and Germany gave first to Mussolini, and a decade later to Hitler—a practical application of the well-tried Catholic principle of submitting to a lesser evil in order to ward off one greater. Both parties later regretted the stand they had taken, but too late to undo what they had helped to accomplish.

I RECALL these "old, unhappy, far-off-things" not in a spirit of anti-clerical provocation but rather to rectify an implication in Professor Fogarty's book that may escape the hasty reader. The clear impression he leaves with us is that there is some ineradicable insufficiency in the agnostic or "humanist" view of democracy. This sort of religious interpretation of democratic principles is becoming increasingly common in our own country: all manner of American public leaders from President Eisenhower down have suggested in no uncertain terms that it is difficult to be a good democrat (or American) if one is not a good Christian (or Jew). To this equation an unrepentant agnostic or "humanist" must necessarily object with all the vigor at his command. In historical terms, the argument is preposterous. In terms of contemporary politics, it is dangerously discriminatory. Indeed, the reverse can be argued rather more convincingly. To agnostics democracy is not instrumental to some otherworldly goal—it is a terrestrial benefit in its own right, subordinate to no other. Or—to conclude with a paraphrase from Professor Fogarty himself—"Where Christian Democracy will lead is not clear. But a good many 'humanists' are taking no risks."

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BOMBING IN NASHVILLE

A Jewish Center and the Desegregation Struggle

JACKSON TOBY

AT 6:20 P.M. on Sunday, March 16, a Negro porter turned out the lights in Nashville's Jewish Community Center and locked up for the night. Through the darkness considerable traffic flowed past 3500 West End Avenue, a sprawling structure in what used to be the elite residential section of the city. A few hundred feet to the west stood Sherith Israel, the Orthodox congregation, which worshipped in a converted mansion. A couple of blocks away—at 3814 West End Avenue—stood the handsome modern building erected by the Conservative congregation. And several miles farther west, amid the estates of Nashville's wealthiest families, stood the Reform Temple, the largest of the three synagogues.

At 8:07 P.M., people living in the neighborhood of the Center heard a dull boom, unusual but not frightening. One lady assumed that her next-door neighbor, who is a traveling salesman, had thrown his bags tc the floor with extra vigor. At 8:27 the wife of Rabbi William B. Silverman received a telephone call from a man who said he was "a member of the Confederate Union." "We have just dynamited the Jewish Community Center. Next will be the Temple and next will be any other nigger-loving place or nigger-loving person in Nashville. And we're going to shoot down Judge Miller in cold blood." Mrs. Silverman, thinking that her husband's life would also be threatened, became so agitated that she "slammed the phone down as hard as I could." Rabbi Silverman telephoned Federal District Court Judge Miller. Threats were nothing new to Judge William E. Miller. On September 13 he had issued a restraining order to halt threats and violence designed to prevent the integration of Nashville's schools. From then on he had occupied a choice place in the segregationist roster of most hated men.

Rabbi Silverman telephoned the Center. A reporter from one of the Nashville television stations answered and confirmed that the Center had been dynamited. Police and firemen on the scene roped off the lawn to hold back the hundreds of curious persons attracted by the sound of the explosion and the sight of shattered glass from the windows. Traffic was jammed bumper to bumper for several blocks. After detectives searched the area for clues, the crowd was permitted to overflow onto the lawn. Rumors circulated that the Temple had also been dynamited. Officials came and went: Mayor Ben West, Police Chief D. E. Hosse, Fire Chief John Ragsdale, District Attorney General Harry G. Nichols. Comparisons were made between this incident and a previous expression of segregationist hostility in Nashville, the dynamiting on September 11 of one of the six grammar schools into which Negro first grade children had been integrated. The Hattie Cotton school had also been unoccupied at the time of the explosion. However, the Center was less seriously damaged than the Hattie Cotton school. Two sticks of dynamite, possibly three, had been detonated just outside one of the two entrances. Many windows were broken; the front doors and the doors to the auditorium had to be replaced; the metal

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THE recent widely reported attack on the Jewish Community Center in Nashville, Tennessee, has spotlighted a complex situation which is here discussed by a sociologist on the staff of Rutgers University, New Brunswick. JACKSON TOBY was born in New York in 1925 and has contributed widely to criminological and sociological publications. This is his first appearance in COMMENTARY.

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overhang covering the entrance and the ceiling in the vestibule required repairs; pieces of concrete were chipped from the entry way. But it was necessary to keep the Center closed only one day, March 17. On Tuesday, March 18, the Center reopened. No members had resigned. Attendance at the nursery school and at other activities was normal.

The prospects for catching the culprit (or culprits) are poor. No one saw the actual lighting of the fuse or any person driving away from the scene. Nor has anyone claimed the reward, now totaling $10,000, for information leading to the arrest of the culprit. It is impossible to trace him through his possession of dynamite, since fifty cases of dynamite are sold every day in Davidson County, largely to road contractors and rock quarries. On Tuesday, March 24, an interview appeared in the Nashville *Tennessean* with David P. Young, vice president of one of the firms selling dynamite in the Nashville area. "Question: How often do you have, say, walk-in trade—people you don't know who just come in to buy two or three sticks? Answer: Fairly frequently, because a limited number of sticks of dynamite is used for blowing out wells. And in the spring people buy it to blow out stumps. Question: How much does it cost? Answer: Twenty-five cents a stick. Question: In your opinion how do terrorists, such as those who bombed the Jewish Center, get possession of dynamite? Answer: They steal it from temporary magazines on construction jobs." The chief of police believes that, when the Jewish Community Center case is solved, the Hattie Cotton school dynamiting will be solved too. So far, however, the perpetrators of both crimes remain at large.

THE dynamiter was universally condemned. Governor Frank G. Clement issued the following statement: "I am shocked and sickened at the thought that anyone in Tennessee would commit the sacrilege of wantonly attempting to destroy a building dedicated to the brotherhood of man." He also offered a $5,000 reward, maximum under state law, for information leading to the dynamiter's arrest and conviction. The city of Nashville offered a $1,000 reward. The Nashville *Tennessean* and Nashville *Banner* printed indignant editorials. The chancellor of Vanderbilt University contributed $100 to the Center to help defray the cost of repairs. (Actually, the $6,000 damage was fully covered by insurance.) Mayor Ben West vowed that "no stone will be left unturned to find the perpetrators of this outrage." Ministers denounced the "criminal" from their pulpits. The Nashville Community Relations Conference, an interracial organization including some of the highest-status people in the city, issued the following statement: ". . . we believe that the citizens of this community are all partly responsible . . . to the extent that we failed to support adequately with our time, our resources and our ideas the forces in our community working for harmony, justice, equality and dignity for all our citizens. This is the time for good citizens to look inward, to seek out and destroy the seeds of prejudice within ourselves and to join hands in a total community effort for better human relations." The New York *Times* ran an editorial on March 20 quoting this statement approvingly.

Although everyone deplored the dynamiting, there were profound differences in the definition of the issues. A small minority, which included, however, several leading ministers, subscribed to the statement of the Nashville Community Relations Conference. These were the liberals. They argued, in effect, that the dynamiting called for a concerted community attack on prejudice. If more non-Jews had adopted a Christian approach to race relations, the Jewish Community Center would not have been perceived by extremists as conspicuously tolerant. A second and much larger group defined the issue as one of law and order. Government officials and businessmen, for example, wanted to live down the South's reputation for violence. It is a deserved reputation; Tennessee had in 1950 fifteen times as many murders in proportion to population as Massachusetts and ten times as many

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assaults with a deadly weapon. As for dynamitings, these are not the outlandish crime in the South that they would be, say, in New England. Violence is poor public relations, however, and Southerners are sensitive to public relations considerations. Lynchings and dynamitings do not help Governor Clement's campaign to attract Northern industry to Tennessee.

There was also a third definition of the issue, one which may have been decisive for the majority of Nashville whites. Bear in mind that a high valuation is placed on religious institutions in Nashville. The governor of the state conducts a weekly Bible class. The juvenile court judge, in his bid for re-election, issued campaign literature containing testimonials from members of his church. No bars or taverns are permitted. Churches fill to overflowing on Sundays. The largest denominations, the Church of Christ and the Baptists, are clearly fundamentalist; the Methodists have fundamentalist leanings—as well as a thriving publishing house. As Dr. Wayland J. Hayes, professor of sociology at Vanderbilt, put it, "Nashville is an unusually 'churchy' town." For Nashville Christians, Jews are a religious group, and the Jewish Community Center a religious institution. They were indignant because they regarded the blasting of a House of God as sacrilege. Ironically, this reaction rested on a misperception of the character of the Center. The emphasis at Nashville's Jewish Community Center is on *Community*, not on *Jewish*. As a matter of fact, when the half-million-dollar structure was still in the planning stage, a controversy existed as to whether the words carved into the concrete should read "Community Center" or "Jewish Community Center." Currently, 10 per cent of the members of the Center are non-Jewish; the director of the nursery school is a Unitarian. True, the non-Jewish members tend to be the egg-heads of Nashville: professors at Vanderbilt or Fisk universities, modernist rather than fundamentalist Protestants, persons without sectarian affiliation, music lovers, theater devotees. Nevertheless, they are not Jewish and this helps to give the Center a cosmopolitan flavor about which everybody seems quite proud.

The absence of a sectarian criterion for Center membership poses the embarrassing question: what would justify the exclusion of Negroes except deference to local prejudices? At the present time such a question is hypothetical. No Negro has applied for membership. But suppose one did. Negro friends of members have attended plays and concerts at the Center and, on at least one occasion, have used the swimming pool. And suppose he were accepted. This might well provoke further violence from segregationist extremists. Consider that pre-school children attend the nursery school. Teen-agers use the gym, the swimming pool, the auditorium. Consider that the building might be in operation when another stick of dynamite goes off. And it might not be one stick but four or five. . . . Clearly, it requires greater courage to favor integration in Nashville than in New York or Chicago.

Rabbi Silverman, perhaps because of his intelligence and eloquence, perhaps because he has been in Nashville longer than the Conservative or the Orthodox rabbi, perhaps because his Reform Temple is wealthier than the other congregations, is regarded by many Nashville citizens as the spokesman for the Jewish community. Although he has no official connection with the Center, the dynamiters chose to telephone *him* after the blast. In threatening the Temple, they were paying a backhanded tribute to Rabbi Silverman's leadership. What course did he recommend for the Jews of Nashville? On March 21, five days after the dynamiting, he wrote a letter to the 650 families in his congregation. He reaffirmed his position that ". . . the attack upon the Negro is the undeniable portent of the attack upon the Jew, and ultimately the Catholic Church, civil liberties, democracy, and Christianity itself." Furthermore, he announced that he had made one change in his schedule of sermon topics. On Friday, March 28, he would preach on the theme, "We Shall Not Yield."

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In his sermon Rabbi Silverman reaffirmed his stand: "*I favor integration*—not only because I am a Jew, not only because my religious faith teaches that God is our universal Father, that all men are brothers . . . but because I am an American [with a] moral mandate to support . . . the decision of the Supreme Court. . . ." He urged his congregation not to heed the fearful voices that had been raised in the Jewish community. He knew that some Jews were thinking of the Nazis and wondering about anti-Semitism. After all, in September, they had watched the Ku Klux Klan burn crosses and provoke street fights in an effort to prevent the start of school integration. John Kasper, the anti-Semitic segregationist from New Jersey, had held nightly rallies in and around Nashville; Kasper urged his followers to stop integration by "shotgun, dynamite or the hanging rope if necessary." Rabbi Silverman was reassuring. Fascism was not on the march in Nashville. The extremists had been defeated in September on the school integration issue. On September 18, eight days after the start of the fall semester and a week after the dynamiting of the Hattie Cotton school, calm prevailed in the public schools; attendance was normal; integrated classes continued. Rabbi Silverman ridiculed the "jittery Jews" who blamed *him* for the dynamiting of the Center, who believed "that because of my pulpit utterances during the Holy Days and my pro-integration stand in the community, all of the Jews of Nashville have been and will continue to be endangered." He revealed that he had been urged to "stick to religion, to Judaism, and the Bible." He replied indignantly, "What is prophetic Judaism if not a dedication to justice and the implementation of the moral precepts of our faith?"

Clearly, Rabbi Silverman takes his religion seriously. He points out the relevance of prophetic principles to the issue of racial justice although talking about religion less specifically would be safer. Yet Rabbi Silverman cannot change the social context in which Nashville's 2,700 Jews live. While Tennessee is not the Deep South, the people of Nashville are Southern enough in their attitudes to prefer segregation. No one doubts how a popular referendum on school integration would go. Judge Miller has recently rejected the *fourth* appeal of the Parents' Preference Committee to delay integration. Many of the ministers favor segregation. The Nashville *Banner* argues for states' rights with the same shrill zest as the Chicago *Tribune* fulminated against Franklin Roosevelt. Vanderbilt University enjoys a national reputation, but Vanderbilt is not sufficiently independent of local sentiments to admit Negroes to its undergraduate college. Apart from tradition, Nashville whites have a vested interest in keeping the Negro "in his place." For instance, less money is spent on Negro schools than on white schools. Thoroughgoing educational integration, unless it were accompanied by larger educational budgets, would result in poorer education for Nashville's white students than they are receiving at present. The vested interest in occupational discrimination is even greater. Negroes constitute only 20 per cent of the population of Davidson County, but they fill the majority of low-paying, menial jobs. Middle-class whites live in better homes and employ more servants than would be possible on the same income in a Northern city. This is because labor is cheap in Nashville—Negro labor, that is. But the biggest vested interest is in a dogma. Those whites who are occupational and educational failures can salve their self-esteem by believing in their innate superiority to Negroes. The followers of John Kasper reported on in the newspapers were largely the street-corner loafers and riffraff of Nashville society. But even the successful members of a competitive society feel inadequate, at least on occasion. According to the anthropologist, Ruth Benedict, this insecurity, generated by the pressure to measure our performances against those of our neighbors, accounts for the seductiveness of the white supremacy doctrine. In short, commitment to segregation as a way of life goes deeper than the White Citizens Council and the Ku Klux Klan. The difference be-

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tween the extremists and the moderates is one of tactics, not values. Keep this massive reality in mind in assessing the problem of Nashville Jewry.

A WEEK after the dynamiting, the physical damage at 3500 West End Avenue was scarcely visible from the street. The damage to Jewish morale was greater. Despite the brisk business-as-usual policy at the Center, Nashville Jews were worried. They asked one another what the "unpleasantness" had meant and whether they had seen the last of violence. The dynamiting dramatized their dependence on the good will of the white Christian majority. Jews constitute less than one per cent of the Nashville population. What if Jews get the reputation of being "nigger-lovers"? Would they continue to enjoy the equal protection of Tennessee laws? Or would future attacks on Jewish institutions be condoned? Events in other Southern cities suggest that there are grounds for anxiety. Temple Beth-El in Miami was dynamited on the same day as the Nashville Community Center and was much more severely damaged. Two attempts were made to dynamite synagogues in North Carolina. Apparently, Jews do not have secure enough status in Southern communities to assume leadership in the movement for racial justice.

Rabbi Silverman, in his March 28 sermon, summarized well the dilemma of those who believe in prophetic ideals and live in a prejudiced community. "It has been said that I am a nigger-lover. That is true! I love and I want God to help me love even more, Negroes and Caucasians, those of every race, every faith, every nationality. . . . Does this mean I will embarrass my congregation? Does this mean that I urge you, my members, to undertake a rash, reckless, immoderate course of action in behalf of integration? No. . . . As I stated in my letter to you, as a Southern congregation we need not initiate or take an overly conspicuous role in advocating integration."

The Jewish Community Center of Nashville will continue to make its facilities available to the United Givers Fund, the American Red Cross, the Nashville Community Relations Conference, and other organizations in which Negroes and whites work for a common cause. On the other hand, there will probably be pressure, subtle or frantic depending on how the Nashville situation develops, to discourage Center members from bringing Negro friends to use the athletic facilities or on social occasions. As for a Negro becoming a member, this was unlikely before the dynamiting; it is impossible now.

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FAITH AS THE LEAP OF ACTION

The Theology of Abraham Joshua Heschel

JAKOB J. PETUCHOWSKI

ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL, a professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary, and author of numerous books and articles on the nature of Judaism, has become for many the leading Jewish theologian in this country. Yet, unlike the majority of his predecessors, Heschel does not believe that Reason can furnish us with the clue to ultimate reality. He does not assume that Reason can answer the questions posed by Faith, or even that Reason is able to ask the kind of question to which Faith has the answer. This break with the rationalist tradition in Jewish theology may account, on the one hand, for the popularity which Heschel (along with Buber and Will Herberg) is currently enjoying on the American Jewish scene. On the other hand, it also makes it more difficult for those who are accustomed to looking for theological truth along the paths of customary rational discourse to appreciate his religious thought.

As early as 1935, when he published an extremely sensitive and perceptive biography of Maimonides in German (still untranslated), Heschel's notion of the role of reason in religion had begun to emerge. Discussing the reputation of Maimonides as the "classical representative of Rationalism," Heschel points out that Maimonides might better be thought of as the man who, time and again, used his *ratio* in order to define the limits of reason. He then describes the last years of Maimonides' life in terms of "a change from contemplation to practice, from cognition to *imitatio Dei*. God is no longer the object of cognition. He becomes the example to be followed. His works, the creatures of the world guided by His providence, take the place of those abstract concepts which constitute the spiritual act in the intellectual cognition of God. In place of the abstract contemplation come the observation of, and absorption in, the concrete event." [My translation from the German original.]

"God is no longer the object of cognition." This is the key to Heschel's thought. Whether or not it also describes the thought of Maimonides is, of course, another question, and in 1936 Heschel shifted his argument to safer grounds with a book on prophecy (*Die Prophetie*), published in Cracow by the Polish Academy of Science. In that work we find him saying that "in the prophetic understanding, God is a subject of which the object is the Prophet himself. That assertion is, therefore, inapplicable which would make God the object of the Prophet's vision. For in this act it is the Prophet who becomes the object of the vision of God." [My translation.]

Not content with a mere description of the prophetic process, Heschel has gone on to make this prophetic understanding of God —or, as he would prefer to say, the prophetic awareness that God understands the Prophet —his very own. In five books written in English subsequent to his arrival in this country (*The Earth Is the Lord's*, 1950; *Man Is Not Alone*, 1951; *The Sabbath*, 1951; *Man's Quest for God*, 1954; *God in Search of Man*, 1956), and in numerous articles and essays (in English, Hebrew, and Yiddish), Heschel has attempted to share his faith not only with the contemporary American Jew,

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CONTINUING the discussion of new trends in contemporary Jewish theology begun in these pages by Judd L. Teller in our March number, JAKOB J. PETUCHOWSKI here examines the work of Abraham Joshua Heschel, a leading figure in the Conservative movement. Rabbi Petuchowski is now assistant professor of Rabbinics at Hebrew Union College and has been a regular contributor to COMMENTARY.

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but also, as is evident from some of his writings, with modern man in general.

By rejecting "conceptual thinking" in favor of what he calls "situational thinking," and "scholasticism" in favor of "depth-theology," Heschel demonstrates his general affinity with the Existentialist and Neo-Orthodox schools of thought, but it is an affinity which must be understood with specific Jewish reservations. What Heschel demands is the "leap of action" rather than the "leap of faith" of the Existentialists. Whereas theology is usually concerned with "the content of believing," Heschel is primarily concerned with the "*act* of believing." As I have already indicated, the starting point of Heschel's approach is his refusal to regard God as the object of human cognition. Speculation, therefore, is ruled out a priori. "Long before we attain any knowledge about God's essence," writes Heschel, "we possess an intuition of a divine *presence*."

But to write about intuition presents a problem in communication: only a poet can communicate his intuitions, share his awareness of a divine presence. It is fortunate, therefore, that Heschel *is* a poet, the master of any language he touches, be it German, Yiddish, English, or Hebrew. And yet, at the same time, one feels a certain reluctance on his part to reveal himself completely, a shying away from sharing his soul's deepest secret. As he himself once put it: "To the extent to which a man reveals his secret, to that extent he empties and denudes himself." [My translation from the Hebrew.] And in his Maimonides biography, he stresses Maimonides' refusal to reveal the deepest layers of his own insights to his disciple Ibn Aknin.

The result of all this is that Heschel can only hint and allude. A reader insensitive to Heschel's use of language might easily believe that he is throwing up a barrage of words, talking or even lulling himself into belief in God. But there is another and more sympathetic way of viewing his constant harping on the "ineffable," his almost compulsive return to the theme of awe and wonder, his frequent disquisitions on the sublime. And that way is to recognize Heschel as a mystic. Of the mystic's experience Evelyn Underhill has said that it "must be expressed if it is to be communicated, and its actuality is inexpressible except in some sidelong way, some hint or parallel which will stimulate the dormant intuition of the reader, and convey, as all poetic language does, something beyond its surface sense. Hence the large part which is played in all mystical writings . . . by that rhythmic and exalted language which induces in sensitive persons something of the languid ecstasy of dream."

Heschel's writings are a perfect illustration of Miss Underhill's idea. His "approach through the ineffable" differs from the approach through speculation in that the latter proceeds from an idea of God's essence to a belief in His existence, whereas in the former "we proceed from an intuition of His presence to an understanding of His essence." Heschel does not set out to find God. For him, God is already there. "Religion begins with God's question and man's answer." "The issue is not the formulation of a *concept* or the acceptance of a definition. We Jews have no concepts; all we have is faith, faith in His willingness to listen to us. We have no information, but we sense and believe in His being near to us." God, as it were, is lying in wait for us. He pursues us more than we pursue Him. That is why the Bible is not so much man's theology as God's anthropology. God, as the title of one of Heschel's books has it, is "in search of man." Heschel, if one may so describe it, is His Prophet, trying to open our ears to the call of God.

But if rational speculation is ruled out as an approach to God, how are we to find Him? For though it may be true that God is waiting and looking for man, it is likewise true that many men seem to lead their lives completely without God. In this connection, Heschel points to the *mitzvah*—usually translated "commandment," but really, in his view, a quite untranslatable word. While other peoples have tried in vain

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to attain an understanding of God by way of inquiry, the Jews have taken another approach which is summed up, in Exodus 24:7, by the words: "We will do and we will hearken [or understand]."

Quoting the Rabbi of Kotzk, Heschel—who has mastered the whole of Jewish literature but who is fond of citing as his "clincher" a *bon mot* or parable of a Hasidic rebbe—interprets the verse in Exodus as follows: "The grasp, the understanding, comes with the deed and through the deed. When we fulfill a *mitzvah* and perform an acceptable deed, we grasp man's attachment to God. If it were possible to say so, God is revealed in our deeds, in the depths of our being we perceive the divine voices." [My translation from the original Hebrew.]

This is what Heschel calls the "leap of action": "To surpass his needs, to do more than he understands in order to understand more than he does. In carrying out the word of the Torah he is ushered into the presence of spiritual meaning. Through the ecstasy of deeds he learns to be certain of the presence of God." *Mitzvot*, being the sphere where man encounters God, are therefore no mere ceremonies or symbols. Heschel is particularly severe in his condemnation of those who would regard them as such. There is a fine irony in an address he delivered before the Central Conference of American Rabbis (reprinted in *Man's Quest for God*), where he turns against the current clamor for symbolism: the Reform rabbis, of all people, stand accused by implication of being too much concerned with symbols and ceremonies.

It almost seems that Heschel is closer in spirit to the protagonists of ritual-less "Prophetic Judaism" who founded the Central Conference than are its present members. Almost, but not quite. For while Heschel would agree with the early Reformers that the God of the Prophets did not demand ceremonies, he would nevertheless insist that the God of the Prophets *did* give *mitzvot*. Consequently, as long as Reform rabbis are trying out ceremonies for aesthetic effect and the like, they are in Heschel's eyes guilty of "playing with the will of God."

A *mitzvah*, as Heschel understands it, is an expression or an interpretation of the will of God. (He never really clarifies this either/or aspect of the definition, thus making it possible for his theories to be adopted by Jews of varying shades of orthodoxy on the question of Revelation.) To those who would ask whether God requires anything of man, Heschel points out that if, as is generally conceded, God requires us "to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him," it is no more difficult to conceive of His requiring us to hallow the Sabbath. For once it is granted that God communicates His will, how can we dare set limitations on His power to make requirements?

Perhaps Heschel's most provocative statement regarding *mitzvot* is that, unlike "symbols" which affect no other reality than man's own psyche, "*mitzvot* affect God." The reader who comes to such passages from a background of "conceptual" rather than of "situational" thinking must remind himself that the God spoken of in this fashion is not the Aristotelian-Maimonidean God, but Heschel's own very personal God, whose presence is intuitively sensed. Nevertheless, the power of the *mitzvah* to affect God is a notion which must sound strange even to non-philosophical Jews. That God has no need of human observances, that the *mitzvot* were given for the sole purpose of human self-discipline and self-ennoblement, is a pretty consistent theme of Rabbinic literature. It is only in Judah Halevi that we get a conception of *mitzvot* which comes close to the Christian notion of sacrament, while it was left to Cabbalism to invest ritual observance with cosmic significance. But it is, after all, out of a Cabbalistic frame of mind that Heschel is addressing us.

For all his stress on the *mitzvah*, Heschel is not blind to certain abuses to which the regimen of *mitzvot* lends itself. "Religious Behaviorism" is what he calls that school of thought for which loyalty to the past, the mere routine observance of traditional law without inner conviction, is the be-all and

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end-all of Judaism. This "Religious Behaviorism" amounts to a Judaism that is all Halachah, and no Aggadah, all law and no faith. Heschel rejects it just as emphatically as he does the other extreme—a creedal Judaism without *mitzvot*. The choice is not between Halachah and Aggadah. The task, in Heschel's view, is to strike a balance between the two.

It is in the realm of prayer that the respective claims of Halachah and Aggadah assume the apparently contradictory demands of both *keva* (fixed times and fixed liturgy) and *kavvanah* (inwardness and spontaneity). Here, too, Heschel is firm in his affirmation of both principles. The fixed times of prayer, he says, are part of "the order of the divine will." They are an immeasurable aid to us when we are in no mood to pray, and by thus forcing oneself to pray, one may be saved from the danger of losing the ability to pray altogether. Again, the fixed liturgy may admittedly be nothing more than makeshift arrangement. Ideally, perhaps, man should pray in his own words, and the liturgical formulae were fixed only when, because of the Exile, men had lost the art of spontaneous prayer. But that is only part of the story. If reciting the words of the liturgy is a "prayer of empathy" (man deriving inspiration from the words on the page before him), and is thus contrasted with the prayer of "self-expression," we ought to remember that even in the latter man is making use of *words*, and words are by nature external. Why not, then, use the words whose efficacy has been proved by millennial use?

Prayer and *mitzvot* thus provide the bridge between man and God; indeed, they are even a means by which man can find God in the first place. But *mitzvah* in Heschel's thought also figures in another context. *Mitzvah* is the antidote to sin. This is important, for Heschel's view of sin is open to misunderstanding. In the second volume of *The Library of Living Theology*, devoted to "Reinhold Niebuhr, His Religious, Social, and Political Thought," there are two contributions by Jewish writers. One is by Heschel, entitled "A Hebrew Evaluation of Reinhold Niebuhr"; the other, "Niebuhr, Scripture, and Normative Judaism," is by Rabbi Alexander J. Burnstein. While Burnstein is at pains to emphasize the difference between Niebuhr's Christian concept of man and of sin and the ideas of what Burnstein calls "normative Judaism," Heschel's contribution amounts to a buttressing of Niebuhr's views of evil and the nature of man with appropriate supporting quotations from Jewish literature. Does this mean that Heschel agrees with Niebuhr on these matters? Niebuhr certainly seems to think so. In his "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism," Niebuhr writes: "If Dr. Heschel had not contributed his paper, I should have been inclined to question Rabbi Burnstein on his interpretation of the Psalms and the Prophets, but not to challenge him on the interpretation of human nature in Judaism; however, Dr. Heschel has in my opinion refuted his position and has piled up a great deal of evidence which has been very instructive to me on the similarities between Christianity and Judaism on this issue, even in the post-Biblical period."

Now, it would not be fair to hold Heschel responsible for what Niebuhr thinks Heschel said, though Niebuhr's conclusion is at least suggestive. Why, after all, did Heschel see fit to support Niebuhr's views from the sources of Judaism? Heschel joins Niebuhr in condemning the "utopianism and deductive thinking of the modern mentality," in recognizing "the evil within the good," and in believing that "even the supreme human efforts must fail in redeeming the world" (why else should Messianism be necessary?). But by way of contrast to all this, Heschel also stresses the centrality of the *mitzvah* in Judaism, and thereby he brings to the fore a dissimilarity between Judaism and Christianity that Niebuhr has apparently failed to notice. (And this in spite of the fact that Heschel says, and in so many words: "It is, therefore, difficult from the point of view of Biblical theology to sustain Niebuhr's view, plausible and profound as it is.")

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Life, says Heschel, revolves around the right and the wrong deed, but we have been trained to be more *mitzvah*-conscious than *averah*- or sin-conscious. (This theme, outlined in Heschel's contribution to the Niebuhr volume, is more fully developed in *God in Search of Man.*) In this respect the Jewish scheme is the reverse of the Christian; for Christianity never took over the concept of *mitzvah,* and gave to "sin" a meaning which the Hebrew term *averah* never had. Without underestimating the sinful capacities of man, Heschel nevertheless points out that the word *averah* denotes "wasting" or "expending to no purpose," so that even the "sin" of Adam may be represented as the "loss" of a *mitzvah.* Since "the central issue is not the sinfulness but the obligations of man," the mere fact of such obligations, of such *mitzvot,* shows us that "man is endowed with the ability to fulfill what God demands, at least to some degree." Seen from the perspective of the *mitzvah,* man's sinfulness becomes a matter of "actual failures" rather than an "essential inability to do the good."

Once we understand this function of the *mitzvah,* we see the road which leads, in Heschel's thought, from the mystical experience of God to the realm of ethical conduct. Piety for Heschel is an attitude toward reality in its entirety, and therefore it must be "alert to the dignity of every human being, and to those bearings upon the spiritual value which even inanimate things inalienably possess." In this context it is interesting to notice Heschel's analysis and condemnation of that "marketing orientation" of modern man which, starting from quite different premises, Erich Fromm was likewise to diagnose as one of the major ills of our time.

The root of our trouble, according to Heschel, is our preoccupation with things in space. The accumulation of wealth, for example, or the progress of technical civilization are concerned with space. Over against this conquest of space, Heschel sets the problem of time: the spiritual, he says, is to be found in time rather than in space. An old Jewish tradition regards the World-to-Come as a "day that is wholly Sabbath." Heschel's book, *The Sabbath,* develops the theme that "the meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. . . . It is a day on which we are called upon to share in what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world." A fine spirituality pervades the pages of this book, which contains a novel interpretation of its subject. But may not the idea of the Sabbath as "holiness in time" be a little too contrived? The same facts, after all, easily lend themselves to completely different interpretations. In the very same year in which Heschel published his book, Erich Fromm, in *The Forgotten Language,* also dealt with the Sabbath, and reached the following conclusion: "By stopping interference with nature for one day you eliminate time; where there is no change, no work, no human interference there is no time. . . . The Biblical Sabbath symbolizes man's victory over time."

INTIMATIONS of God, the life "replete with *mitzvot,*" piety, and Sabbath observance—all these are not merely things which Heschel recommends for our future acceptance. Such a life existed concretely in the vanished world of East European Jewry, which Heschel describes in *The Earth Is the Lord's.* The East European, rather than the Spanish, era is for him the golden age of Jewish history. In Spain, Jewish life was aristocratic, for despite the outstanding literary productions of individuals, "knowledge of Jewish lore does not seem to have been widespread among Spanish Jews." In East Europe, on the other hand, Jewish knowledge and Jewish piety were spread through the total population. Where else—Heschel exclaims—but in a place like Berditshev could a book be found bearing the stamp of "The Society of Wood-Choppers for the Study of Mishnah"?

Heschel's love for East European Jewry knows no bounds. Thus he both defends the arid hair-splitting of pilpulistic Talmud study, and praises the Hasidim who revolted

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against it. Even the rebellious young Jews "who left the sacred books or the universities to till the ground and dry the swamps of Palestine" get an almost affectionate pat on the shoulder—though in a later book, Heschel expresses disfavor at the fact that these very same young people called themselves *Bilu* (an abbreviation of Isaiah 2:5, "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk"), when "the essence of the verse, *in the light of the Lord,* was omitted."

In assessing some aspects of Heschel's contribution to modern Jewish thought (and it should be stressed that there are many areas not covered in the present essay), we may conveniently begin with this description of East European Jewish life. The book was published in 1950, and one has no right to expect an exercise of the critical faculty by a writer whose suffering in the loss of the culture of his childhood must be beyond measure. It would be unfair, then, to quarrel with Heschel for not bringing to the fore some of the less attractive qualities of East European Jewish life. But if the picture he has drawn for us is meant to inspire, and to engrave itself on our minds as a Jewish golden age to be emulated, we do have a right to inquire just how accurate a picture it really is.

Heschel himself speaks of the "spiritual confusion of the last hundred years," when the impact of the modern world upon the ghettos of the East wrought havoc with the Tradition. "We compared our fathers and grandfathers, our scholars and rabbis, with Russian or German intellectuals. We preached in the name of the twentieth century, measured the merits of Berditshev and Ger with the standards of Paris and Heidelberg. Dazzled by the lights of the metropolis, we lost at times the inner sight." Now, the very people thus affected—not to speak of those who, coming from the "Lord's earth," banned synagogues from their settlements in Palestine and staged Yom Kippur balls in New York on Kol Nidre night—were presumably brought up in the regimen of Jewish law and *mitzvot,* men and women who had not been exposed to the travesties of the modern American synagogue service which Heschel so much deplores. They were people who, if Heschel is right, should have had intimations of God in their performance of *mitzvot,* people who actually *lived* that which is now being held out as an *ideal* to us.

It would seem, therefore, that the East European golden age, in contrast to the Spanish golden age, was antagonistic to the broader horizons of Western civilization and could maintain itself only within the limitations imposed from outside. Was the God whom the *mitzvot*-observer in Berditshev encountered in his pious deeds really so weak that the dazzling lights of Paris and Heidelberg could put Him to flight? Or is it simply that the results of *mitzvah*-observance which Heschel promises us cannot be guaranteed outside a specific, protected environment?

THIS is a question to ponder before taking the recommended "leap of action." Factors of culture, environment, and education are not negligible, and what had even begun to become problematical in Berditshev can hardly be a pat solution in Chicago. Nevertheless, what Heschel has to say on the subject of the *mitzvah* must be taken with the utmost seriousness by the modern American Jew. There is even something in the American pragmatic tradition that makes the "leap of action" rather less dubious than it would have appeared to an earlier generation reared on Teutonic logic. Try and see if it works! Buy a *lulav,* and shake it on the feast of Succoth, and perhaps the performance of this *mitzvah* will awaken spiritual potentialities within you! If it works, fine; if it fails, no harm done!

But this is a caricature of what Heschel wants to say. In the first place, by appropriating a *mitzvah* in that frame of mind, the chances are that we will be influenced by aesthetic considerations. Thus, though the *mitzvah* of *lulav* may appeal to us, the *mitzvah* of spitting in front of the man who refuses to marry his deceased brother's widow (Deuteronomy 25:9) may very well not. In other words, we are introducing into our

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consideration of *mitzvah* the very criteria which, according to Heschel, would deprive a *mitzvah* of its essential character and reduce it to the level of customs, ceremonies, and symbols. Then we would be back where we started; and it is hard to disagree with Heschel's condemnation of the current cult of "symbolism."

The fact is, of course, that Heschel's phrase "leap of action" is a sophism. He may make a distinction between the "leap of faith" (or, as he calls it, the "leap of thought") and the "leap of action," but his "leap of action" actually presupposes a "leap of faith." It presupposes my belief that there is a God, my faith that the performance of a *mitzvah* will vouchsafe me an encounter with Him. That is to say, my "leap of action" is not a leap from nothing into something, but a leap from my already acquired faith in God into an awareness that the Divine is revealed in the *mitzvah*. What is more, the kind of God I believe in must be the kind of whom a priori I do not deny the possibility of this form of revelation. Once I believe in such a God, the "leap" is no longer such an athletic feat, and may even be unnecessary. But if I do not believe, then the "leap of action" becomes nothing more and nothing less than a form of experimentation with ceremonies.

Yet perhaps such experimentation is not to be despised. It may well be that what is, to begin with, a mere "ceremony" with which I experiment turns into a *mitzvah* if and when I hear myself addressed by God through it. Such, it would seem, was the approach of Franz Rosenzweig who, himself traveling the long road of experimentation from nothing to something, may have been somewhat more aware of, and sympathetic to, the difficulties besetting the path of the modern Jewish *ba-al t'shuvah* ("home-comer").

But whether we acquire our *mitzvot* along the path mapped out by Rosenzweig, or whether we take the "leap" recommended by Heschel, the basic problem remains: can we believe in a God who reveals Himself in *mitzvot*? I have suggested elsewhere* that there are at least three aspects of God which the Jewish belief in Unity is meant to unify. There is the "God of the Philosophers," the "God of Israel," and the *Shechinah*, the God of personal religious experience. While it may be difficult to regard the "God of the Philosophers" as revealing Torah, no such difficulty arises in conceiving of the "God of Israel" in this capacity. And the God of personal experience, the *Shechinah*, would vouch for the reality of the "God of Israel," whom critics might simply call a "reported God." The problem of our time is to reestablish that Unity.

Heschel has dealt at length with the God of personal religious experience. He has spoken in a sensitive manner of the "God of Israel." But he has done all this at the expense of the "God of the Philosophers." He has actually told us that "the moment we utter the name of God we leave the level of scientific thinking and enter the realm of the ineffable." He has warned us that the ideas of Judaism "become caricatures when transported into categories of pedestrian thinking." He has spoken of the "presymbolic, preconceptual level of thinking" on which the ultimate insight takes place. Instead of striving for that higher unity of rational thought and mystical insight, he has almost declared war on the former, and has practically branded the philosophical quest for God as idolatry.

But can the "God of the Philosophers" be so cavalierly dismissed from the mind of the 20th-century Jew? How, indeed, can Heschel hope to communicate his insights to those of us who are benighted enough to tarry in the realms of "conceptual thinking" if he shuns conceptual thought altogether? For it is eminently clear that Heschel *wants* to communicate. His voluminous writings are not directed to initiates alone, to those who have already joined him on the *via mystica*. As the subtitles of his two major works indicate, he wants to present "A

*"Problems of Reform Halakhah," *Judaism*, Fall 1955.

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Philosophy of Religion" and "A Philosophy of Judaism." What emerges, however, is not a "system," not a ready-made philosophy of religion or of Judaism, but a feeling, a mood, powerful enough to carry us with it and heighten our religious sensitivity. The constantly repeated assertion that God is not an object of our thinking, but we the object of His thought; the attempt to communicate —and yet to withhold—the intimations and allusions of the Divine; the emphasis on the "leap of action" and the life of piety; the paean to the Sabbath and the rapture over Eastern Europe; the insistence on the almost magical quality of the *mitzvah* and the simultaneous praise of both the institutionalism and the spontaneity of prayer—all this serves to stir up the feeling, to induce the mood.

There is a Hasidic story, which Heschel quotes somewhere in his writings, about one Hasid asking another what he had learned from his rebbe. The unexpected reply was: "How he laces his shoes." This, too, in the Hasidic way of thinking, is Torah. To the outsider it may seem the indication of a mood rather than actual Torah, and it is the same kind of mood which confronts the reader of Heschel's books.

There is danger in wallowing in the irrational. Moods are in need of the corrective of Reason, and Judaism in the 20th century, as the late Erich Unger made so abundantly clear,* cannot survive if it by-passes, and permits itself to be by-passed by, the constant development of cognitive thought. Perhaps one day Heschel will see his way clear to extending the concept of Divine Unity to include the "God of the Philosophers." Meanwhile, however, he has at least done justice to the "God of Israel" and the *Shechinah,* who have fared rather poorly at the hands of previous Jewish theologians, and he has performed the infinitely valuable service of stressing the need for a sense of awe and reverence. Modern man has to relearn what to do "with his ultimate wonder, with the moments of awe, with the sense of mystery," whether or not he intends to erect his whole theological structure on wonder, awe, and mystery. And he could do worse than go to Heschel for guidance.

*"Modern Judaism's Need for Philosophy," COMMENTARY, May 1957.

FOR HIS FATHER

WILLIAM S. POSTER

SOMEDAY, when I am alone in your office,
maybe with my good friend, Carol Dombenek,
reading over your books, those complicated cases,
struggles of individuals, networks of events,
busy intervals between masses of detail,
relations of people to people, groups, arbitrations,
all possibilities, the money tugging back and forth endlessly,
converted into fuel, journeys to the moon, vacations,
educations, the atmosphere and structure of your children;
watching the gulls plough up the horizon,
my mind sieved by the foghorns like a fog,
adding and subtracting these perpetual human items,
it will come to me, your identity, at once,
and I shall take care of it forever afterwards.

WILLIAM S. POSTER has often been represented in our pages. His last previous contribution was a review of *New and Selected Poems* by Kenneth Fearing, in our August 1957 number.

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THREE POEMS

DELMORE SCHWARTZ

Jacob

All was as it is, before the beginning began, before
We were bared to the cold air, before
Pride. Fullness of bread. Abundance of idleness.
No one has ever told me what now I know:
Love is unjust, justice is loveless.

So, as it was to become, it was, in the black womb's ignorance
Coiled and bound, under the mother's heart.
There in the womb we wrestled, and writhed, hurt
Each other long before each was other and apart,
Before we breathed: who then committed greed,
Impersonation, usurpation? So, in the coming forth,
In the noose and torment of birth, Esau went first,
He was red all over. I followed him, clutching his heel,
And we were named: Esau, the one of the vivid coat,
Jacob, the one who clutches the heel of the one
Who has a vivid coat. The names were true
As the deceptive reality into which we were thrown.
For I did not know what clutching was, nor had I known
Would I have known whose heel I clutched, my brother's or my own!

So, the world we entered then and thus was one
In which the second must be second that the first may be first.
The world of precedence, order, other, under and above,
The darkness, sweetness, confusion and unity of love!
How the truth of our names became, as we grew, more true,
Growing like truth. How could it be otherwise? For truth abides
Hidden in the future, in the ambush of the marvelous,
Unknown and monstrous, at the very heart of surprise.

The gift was mind. The gift was eminence. The gift
Like every gift, was guilt. The guilt began
In the darkness and dark mystery where all begins.
The mystery of the perpetual invisible fires whence flow
The very beasts and woods where—
with what happiness!
what innocence!—
Esau my brother hunted, cantering like the horses of summer,
And sleeping, when he returned, the sleep of winter farms,
Spontaneous and blessed, like energy itself, sleeping or awake.
Until the hour when the angel struck!

So it was: so:
O angel of the unspeakable,
Why must a gift be guilt and hurt the gifted one?

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O angel of the unspeakable, power of powers,
Locking my reins, my arms, my heart all night
So that my body was burdened as with the load of all stones
Dost thou remember what, in the darkness, I cried,
During the desperation in which I died
The last death of hope and the little deaths of the heart
Wrestling and writhing between two rivers—on one bank,
Esau, awaiting me, like a river slept—beneath me once more.
"Hast thou not seen," I cried aloud, to the unspeakable,
"Esau my brother: his handsome hunting heart upon a horse?"

How should it seem so strange that I should win,
Since victory was my gift? Unjust like every gift,
A something neither deserved, nor gained by toil. . . .
How else could it be gift and given?
Favor: favored: favorite:
Gold hair: great strength: Esau was very tall,
Possessed by the supple grace of the sea's waves, breaking.

Now Joseph is, as I was: in Egypt's pit,
In that accustomed depth and isolated height
The solitude of eminence, the exiled intelligence,
Which separated me even as it created me:
Estranged and unloved, gifted and detested,
Denied the love of the servants and the dogs.
Joseph a stranger in Egypt may only know
What I have known: my gifts, my victory, my guilt.
For Egypt is a country like a gift.

The gift is loved but not the gifted one.
The coat of many colors is much admired
By everyone, but he who wears the coat
Is not made warm. Why should the gift be the cause of pain,
O thou unspeakable? Must the vivid coat
Of eminence elect the favored favorite
As scapegoat or turncoat, exile or fugitive,
The loved of mother and God, and by all others
Shunned in fear or contempt?
I knew what it was,
When Joseph became my favorite: knew the sympathy
Of the long experience of the unasked-for gift:
Knew the nature of love: how many colors
Can a coat have? What should we wish, if
We could choose? What should I desire
—Not to have loved my son, the best of sons?
Rejected the choice of love? Should I have hidden
My love of him? Or should he have concealed the self
I loved, above all others, wearing the coat
Which is customary, the coat his brothers wore?
To how many coats can a color give vividness?
How can the heart know love, and not love one the more?
Love is unjust: justice is loveless.

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Poem

I WAKEN to a calling,
A calling from somewhere down, from a great height,
Calling out of pleasure and happiness,
And out of darkness, like a new light,
A delicate ascending voice,
Which seems forever rising, never falling
Telling all of us to rejoice,
To delight in the darkness and the light,
Commanding all consciousness forever to rejoice!

Sonnet

I AM a book I neither wrote nor read,
A comic, tragic play in which new masquerades
Astonishing as guns crackle like raids
Newly each time, whatever one is prepared
To come upon, suddenly dismayed and afraid,
As in the dreams which make the fear of sleep
The terror of love, the depth one cannot leap.

How the false truths of the years of youth have passed!
Have passed at full speed like trains which never stopped
There where I stood and waited, hardly aware,
How little I knew, or which of them was the one
To mount and ride to hope or where true hope arrives.

I no more wrote than read that book which is
The self I am, half-hidden as it is
From one and all who see within a kiss
The lounging formless blackness of an abyss.

How could I think the brief years were enough
To prove the reality of endless love?

A NEW collection of DELMORE SCHWARTZ'S poems is scheduled to appear next year under the Doubleday imprint, and Mr. Schwartz is also editing the *Portable Heine* for Viking. His previous books include several volumes of verse and fiction, among them *Shenandoah* (1942), *The World Is a Wedding* (1948), and *In Dreams Begin Responsibilities* (1938). Our readers will recall the article by Heinz Politzer, "The Two Worlds of Delmore Schwartz," in our December 1950 number, and the selection of six poems by Mr. Schwartz in March of that same year.

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A VISIT TO S'DE BOKER

On the Israeli Frontier

JULIUS HORWITZ

I WAS restless at S'de Boker. It was March, 1955. A sandstorm had blurred the sky. The sun shone like a smoky disc. The dogs on a running leash barked at their shadows. The grounds inside the barbed wire enclosure were deserted. I had the room of a settler who was on a visit to Jerusalem. I cocked his rifle to make certain I would know how to use it. It was like the first rifle I had been handed in the army, bolt action wtih a five-cartridge clip. There were additional bullets in an ash tray. I looked at the books on a rack. Most of them were technical, studies of the soil. I picked up a text on soil irrigation, waiting for the knock on the door.

I fell asleep waiting for the knock. The long ride out from Beersheba had tired me. I had hitched a ride on the provision truck from S'de Boker that had come into Beersheba for fresh meat and supplies. In the truck I sat on a sack of potatoes, trying to keep my seat and trying to see the Negev I wanted to see, the stretches of desert and the rock and sand formations that made you feel you had at last arrived at one point where you felt time had a beginning. The shapes thrust themselves out of the earth without the neat resolve of the Pennsylvania countryside. The earth is raw and looks untouched until you begin to walk in the Negev on foot. Then you can see the stones formed in a circle, the mark of a camp that may have been made yesterday or a thousand years ago.

I awoke without hearing a knock. I was disappointed, for I had grown accustomed to the routine of entering a new kibbutz. First there is food if you haven't eaten, then you're taken to a room to rest, and after an hour's nap one of the people from the kibbutz, usually someone who speaks good English, comes to fetch you and introduce you to the members he feels you can talk with. For you're a stranger in a community where there are no street lights, no cafés, no restaurants, no hotel lobbies, no groups of idling people, only the dark of a country night.

In Beersheba, at the café, Ben-Adi had introduced me to the settlers from S'de Boker who were eating and drinking coffee and sitting around a big table looking more like extras in a cowboy movie than desert farmers. They stared at my baggy gray flannels, the heavy green fisherman's sweater and plaid sport jacket that I wore, as though I had just gotten off the stagecoach from Dodge City wearing dancing slippers. One of the settlers gave me a steel-gray stare. His voice was American; his accent Western. He nodded his head slightly. The rest just stared past me into their own conversation. But they agreed I could ride on their provision truck and that was all I was interested in.

The girl at the table put five simple straight questions to me: who was I, where was I from, how long had I been in Israel, was I planning on staying, what was I doing in Israel. She wore blue jeans and spoke English with authority. Her face was broad and handsome, her body had the swift sure movement that you immediately felt a woman would have to have to survive S'de Boker. Ben-Adi quickly told me that she had commanded troops in the Negev, that she had fought the Germans as a partisan and then as a captain in the regular Russian

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JULIUS HORWITZ hails from Cleveland and contributed a series of stories about urban life to COMMENTARY some years back. He is the author of *The City* (World, 1953).

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army. I later learned she was also an intelligence officer for the Negev.

There was only one gun available when the provision truck started back from Beersheba. The girl took the rifle and gave it to the American (who I learned was her husband).

"*You* may need it," he told her.

"No," she told him, "there's one pistol, that will be enough."

"But just in case—"

"We won't need the rifle and you will," she told him. He was staying behind to visit the Bedouins in an attempt to buy horses.

"All right," he said, "but be careful." He took the rifle. The truck turned into the main street of Beersheba which enters the desert in about a minute's time.

I DECIDED that I wouldn't get a knock on the door at S'de Boker. And I didn't feel like reading any further into the text on soil irrigation. I left the room. I saw a party of soldiers getting ready to leave the settlement. They were loaded down with BAR's, rifles, machine guns. It looked like a war party. Then I saw Ben Gurion come out of his house with his wife. She was bundling him into a heavy three-quarter army coat. He wore rough army pants. His head was uncovered. His white shock of hair looked just as it did in the photographs in the New York *Times*. I asked if I could join the party. No one objected. I got into the scout car alongside Ben Gurion. We seemed to have more guns and fire power than the Palmach troops who took Safed.

We rode out of the gate of S'de Boker just across the field to where the earth was turned for growing. We got out of the scout car and the soldiers took up defensive positions to guard Ben Gurion. He walked over to where an irrigation sprinkler was whirling water into the desert.

"Is this the first irrigation?" I asked Ben Gurion.

"Yes," he said, "since the creation."

"Of the kibbutz?" I asked.

"No," Ben Gurion said, "since the creation of the world."

We watched the whirling water and then got back into the scout car and rode past the barbed wire fence into the settlement.

I walked over to the house of the girl who had OK'd my stay at the settlement. She wore an apron over her blue jeans. She was sweeping out the dust from her living room. She lived next door to Ben Gurion. The houses at S'de Boker are square, wooden, built for raw utility.

She told me that the sand had been blowing for three days in the Negev.

"And you can't keep it out. It gets into everything."

She kept sweeping as she talked.

I told her I had ridden out with Ben Gurion to see the new irrigation sprinkler and what he had said about the irrigation.

She said that that was Ben Gurion's way of speaking. Ben Gurion's wife came out of their house with a pail of wet wash. She hung up a suit of winter underwear, socks, more underwear.

The girl kept sweeping and dusting. I stood in the doorway.

"I can't invite you in," she said, "until I've cleaned the house. It's too dirty this way. This dust spoils the house."

"I'll look around the settlement," I told her.

S'de Boker didn't seem to be thriving. It looked desolate, wind-swept. The barbed wire and the soldiers on guard gave you a feeling of being in a concentration camp. The settlement sits in the middle of nowhere. The closest buildings are the ruins of a city that was lived in two thousand years ago. You didn't feel that you were in a kibbutz like K'far Blum or even the younger, tougher kibbutzim in the Jerusalem Corridor. I saw no one walking about. But strangely, I heard the high-pitched voice of a boy reciting the prayers that I remembered from my Bar Mitzvah.

In the evening I ate in the small communal dining hall. No one spoke to me and I didn't start any conversations. But Mrs. Ben Gurion called me over to where she was sitting. She asked me who I was, how long I had been in Israel, why had I

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come to S'de Boker, and did I know her nephew Will Maslow. I didn't know Will Maslow but I knew of him, and I said so and it seemed to please her.

I went back to my room. It was a black night and very cold. I checked the rifle and propped it against the chair alongside my bed. I turned out the light and walked out of the room to stand in the doorway. I didn't want the light to illumine me as a target. My room was just a stone's throw from the barbed wire. I stood in the doorway to get a good look at the Negev sky. The sky is not as extraordinary as it is at Masada, the low sky with the great hanging stars. It's a vast sky in the Negev and you quickly realize how small a niche S'de Boker takes up, how great is an Ohio spring rain to the whirling sprinkler propped up against an oil drum.

But I heard voices from the girl's house. And it was the same sky that listens with indifferent patience to all of the quarrels between husbands and wives.

I heard the cowboy yelling, the American from the West. The girl yelled. She wept and raged. He tried to tell her that it was nothing. She yelled that he was crazy for risking his life. I began to pick out what had happened. He had ridden all night through the Negev on a horse he had bought from a Bedouin chief. You could have been killed, she yelled at him. But I wasn't! I don't want you dead! I don't want any more dead!

THE sun was still clouded by the sand the next day. Now the sun looked heavy, as though it were going to fall into the desert. I walked out of the dining hall and the cowboy came toward me with a big hello. He didn't look like the same person who had given me the dead-pan greeting in Beersheba.

"Come and see my horse," he said. He told me he had bought the horse from a Bedouin chief. He had ridden about sixty kilometers from the Bedouin camp to S'de Boker.

"Weren't you in danger?" I asked.

"No," he said. "I know this territory. You can't let it frighten you. You just have to be prepared. Like this knife." He pointed to a hunting knife hanging from his belt. "You can't tell when some crazy Arab out there will crawl through the barbed wire and decide to make you his passport to heaven. So you're prepared but not frightened. When I rode through the Arab territory I wore white Arab headgear and when I got near Israeli territory, I sang American songs. Nobody took a shot at me. And there aren't too many people in this territory who can hit a man riding at night at a good pace on an unspoiled Arab horse. C'mon and look at this beauty."

The horse was a light speckled gray with clean swift lines.

"Watch her in action."

The cowboy mounted the horse and rode her bareback, taking her for a fast gallop, pulling her up to a sudden stop, talking to her in that special language of coaxing and praise that horses appear to understand.

"Why did you buy the horse?" I asked.

"To breed them out here."

"What about grass and the Arabs?"

"There's plenty of grass in this territory. Right in between these hills you see fine patches. The Arabs manage to find grass for their sheep. You just have to get to know this territory. You can't stay behind barbed wire fences. You've got to move free."

"Aren't the Bedouins dangerous?"

"They'll kill but not too often. And I think they might like to get into the horse business if only through the rustling end. You know, there aren't too many horses in Israel. Everybody says this isn't a country for horses. Well, this territory is something like the territory I come from, only of course this is something special. This territory has a special kind of history buried in almost every inch of the place. You see some strange stuff when you go out riding in the desert. And I think horses would be perfect for working this territory. A lot of it is flat country and you can cut through the hills without too much trouble."

He asked me if I wanted to try out the horse. I told him the last horse I had ridden was at Coney Island.

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"How do you like it here?" I asked.

"I like it because it is something special. That gives it an excitement. But I'm getting tired of S'de Boker. I'd like to breed horses and build a house where there's not another house in front of you. You know, I come from Western farming and grazing land. I grew up to be a farmer. I can do just about everything a man has to do on a farm. But these people here," and he pointed to some of the settlers entering the dining hall, "they're not farmers yet, though some of them have done the best farming I've seen. But they know only one or two things, they're not farmers yet the way the farmers are farmers back in the States, and that's what this territory needs. We've got to break out and be on this Negev territory or it won't be ours."

His wife came toward us and I heard that her name was Judith. She still wore her apron over her blue jeans. She looked pleased that her husband was friendly with me.

"Let's make a dinner tonight," he suggested.

"All right," Judith said, "the house will be cleaned up by then."

THE house was clean. It shone. The sandstorm had been swept out. The table was set with napkins, gleaming modern stainless flatware, water glasses that sparkled. We ate a fine Italian spaghetti and Judith served a lemon pie she had baked. She served the dinner like a suburban housewife, careful to see that the water glasses were filled, anxious about the portions, happy when we said the pie was excellent and you couldn't get better pie in New York City. Ed told me while she was in the kitchen that his wife could write her initials with a 50-caliber machine gun. He said she was a better shot with a rifle than he was. And he was pretty good, having handled a gun since he was a boy. He showed me a rifle he had brought home from the army in Germany. "It's a good gun for this territory. You need range and a lot of accuracy."

Their dog was curled up under the table. The dog roamed the barbed wire fence on a running leash all day. Ed said they used to let the dog roam loose at night within the settlement but the dog attacked too many settlers. "He's only trained for us," Ed said. A huge German police. The dog growled. It leaped from under the table while we were eating and barked at the door. Then there was a knock at the door. Judith held the dog and Ed opened the door. It was a friend, who didn't come in when he saw us eating supper. Judith let go of the dog and he stretched out across the threshold.

"He heard before us," I said.

"He's trained for this," Ed said. "He's not a spoiled German police dog. Judy is the only one who can really take him on."

"Do you get many intruders?" I asked.

"Not now. But Judy was here when the settlement opened for business. The Arabs attacked the first night and two of the settlers got killed. The Arabs got it too. Not too long ago they killed a girl waiting for a ride on the highway."

I told Ed I had ridden out of the settlement with a tractor driver who was going up the road for a few minutes and he didn't have a gun.

"I wouldn't go out without a gun," Ed said. "He was just crazy. You need a gun just because there's nothing like a gun when the other man has a gun. But some of the people out here like to think of themselves as pretty tough guys. Being at S'de Boker makes them tough. They haven't seen too much real action anywhere else. The tough days are just about over. Now we need herds of horses to breed on this territory, that'll open up the land."

"What about sheep farming?" I asked. "Doesn't it open up the land?"

"We're not too good at sheep farming. An Arab kid of six can do a better job with sheep than any of us can. And you don't get too far with sheep. But with horses this whole territory is yours."

I noticed a rifle against the bed, another rifle against a chair.

Judith poured coffee for us.

"You're talking more," she said to Ed,

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"more than I've ever heard you talk to anyone."

"He's a writer like you," Ed said. "He can listen to what somebody else says. You don't get too many people out here like that. Most of the people who pass through this territory are me me me me or I I I I."

"What did you write?" I asked Judith.

"It's a long story—"

"And a good one," Ed said, "and she wrote it in English. She can read and write in about eight languages."

"Can I see what you wrote?" I asked.

"It's too long for you to read now. I'll pick out a couple of chapters. But you should know what went on before."

And then she told me a story that was fantastic even for Israel where almost every single person can look back on his life like Homer beginning the Iliad.

Judith washed the dishes and I started to read the chapter she selected. It told of a wild New Year's Eve party in the house of a German chief of police where she was working as a maid and an espionage agent. How she saw the Germans! The Germans overwhelmed by their fat successes, their absolute power to kill. A Nazi officer slapped her face when he didn't like her answers after she was arrested on suspicion of espionage. "Why don't you go and fight on the Russian front instead of slapping servant girls!" That calmed the German. She told me the biggest mistake people made was to take the Germans on their own terms. You had to see them as men who could be bribed, murdered, laughed at, frightened, men who started whimpering when you put a revolver to their head.

"What do you think of the way I write?" Judith asked. "Is my English all right?"

"Your English is perfect. And you have a style. One person is talking on the pages. That's impossible to do unless you're really writing."

"I think it's the lemon pie in the Negev desert that makes you say that!"

"What will you do with the book?"

"Keep writing it, until it's finished."

She cut into the lemon pie.

"Take some more," she said. "This is probably the only lemon pie in all Israel. Ed insists on pie."

We finished the pie and I said I ought to be leaving. Ed cautioned me to lock the door of my room. He also asked me if I had a rifle, picking up his rifle to offer it to me. I told him I had a loaded gun in the room. I thanked them for the dinner and for an instant I felt as though I were leaving an apartment on West 10th Street.

I walked the short dark distance to my room with a hurried step. I locked the door and checked the rifle. I also checked the window to make certain that it was locked. Sometimes hand grenades are quietly dropped through unlatched window screens. I fell asleep not at all certain that I would fall asleep.

In the morning I got up at six to hitch a ride on the Elath road back to Beersheba. A girl from S'de Boker was waiting by the side of the road. She was carrying a briefcase. She told me that the cars and trucks usually left Elath before dawn. She was on her way to Haifa. We waited and no cars came down the highway. A young settler joined us. He wanted to get to Jerusalem. He suggested we walk ahead up the road. We started walking away from S'de Boker. There were no settlements on the road between us and Beersheba. And the only traffic would come from Elath or perhaps an army truck returning to Beersheba. I looked at the settler to see if he was carrying a gun. He didn't have a rifle but I thought he would at least have a pistol. I didn't see a gun. The wild Negev landscape, beginning now to overwhelm the newly laid road, made me ask, "Why aren't you carrying a gun?" He looked at me as though an answer wasn't necessary. But I asked again, "Don't you need a gun? You can be ambushed any minute along this road." He didn't speak English well enough to answer. The girl translated for him. She said he said that fifteen kilometers away was the S'de Boker sheep-herding outpost and there we could get lunch if we didn't pick up a ride.

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BICKER AT PRINCETON

The Eating Clubs Again

WALTER GOODMAN

WHEN the *Social Register* was introduced to America early in this century, it was distinguished not alone for its contents, but for the color of its binding—orange and black, which, as one reporter of the social scene remarked, "suggested the colors of America's most elegant university." The institution whose colors did credit even to the *Social Register* was Princeton, which at the time specialized in presenting higher education and other divertissements to the sons of wealthy and established families of the East and the South.

Even during that high-toned and socially homogeneous era at Princeton, its eating clubs were a source of great disappointment to some students and of concern to some observers. In 1902 a writer in the *Alumni Weekly* concluded an article on the clubs with these words: "It is a perplexing question and some day it is going to give us trouble."

The clubs have been giving trouble ever since, in a relatively quiet way. This year the trouble was somewhat noisier than usual. Since the 1949-50 term, every Princeton sophomore who sought admission to an eating club for his junior and senior years (virtually the entire sophomore class) had, in fact, managed to get in somewhere. But when the bids were closed last February, twenty-three students—about half of them Jewish—had still not received an invitation to what they felt was a suitable club. Fifteen Jewish students signed the following statement: "I feel I have been discriminated against because of race or religion." The story was quickly picked up by the press, and in the following days the New York *Post* was able to indulge its fondness for the four-and-five-column headline: PRINCETON'S BIAS BATTLE ON AGAIN; HOW IT FEELS TO BE AN "OUTCAST" AT PRINCETON; ADL AND STUDENT GROUP JOIN ATTACK ON PRINCETON BIAS. "Trouble" for a financial, religious, or educational body is frequently synonymous with unfavorable publicity; the story was spread by the wire services, and Princeton was clearly in trouble.*

THE first of the present-day eating clubs was founded in 1879, just about the time that the faculty's thirty-year fight against fraternities was being won and the Greek-letter societies were banished from Princeton. The pleasures of communal dining had long been recognized by Princeton's undergraduates; small, informal eating clubs had existed almost from the founding of the university, before the Revolutionary War. In an article on the clubs' history in the January 1955 issue of *Social Problems*, Dean A. Allen tells us that a handful of boys simply made a year's agreement with some town housekeeper to take their meals to-

THE recent controversy over the Princeton eating clubs, which reflects the changes taking place in the attitude of America's most fashionable university toward social discrimination, is here described by WALTER GOODMAN. Mr. Goodman has written for numerous other periodicals as well as COMMENTARY—his last previous contribution to these pages being "Social Science on Madison Avenue" (April 1957)—and is the author of *The Clowns of Commerce* (Sagamore Press), published last year.

*The unpleasantness was aggravated by two other recent events which had placed Princeton in the glaring light of newspaper publicity—a speech on campus by Alger Hiss in 1956, and the dismissal from the academic community last summer of the Reverend Dr. Hugh Halton, a Roman Catholic priest with highly critical and extravagantly expressed feelings about the declining moral standards of the university.

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gether. As time went on, these groups became better organized; they adopted names and continued season after season. A fortuitous boost for the club system came in 1856, with the burning down of the college refectory. Students who didn't attach themselves to some club had to get their meals where they could in the small town of Princeton. The inconvenience of foraging, not to mention the quality of the food available in the neighborhood, made the clubs almost indispensable, and by the time the refectory was rebuilt, twenty years later, they were solidly established features of the Princeton campus. Some designed special hats in the club colors which were ceremoniously passed on to new members; some wore orange and black jerseys and golfing suits.

In 1879, a loan from a wealthy alumnus enabled a group of upperclassmen first to rent, then to buy a building to be used as a permanent eating club, hire a steward and other servants, and get a charter from the State of New Jersey as a private corporation. Other groups followed this lead, and in a few years the clubs became so important a part of the school's life that a student's social status could be measured by which club accepted him—while those who were not accepted at all became an increasingly unenvied company.

THE situation was disturbing enough by 1907 for the new president of Princeton, Woodrow Wilson, to advance the idea of a "quad plan"—presently in operation at Harvard. By this proposal, students of all four classes and unmarried faculty members would be housed together in dormitories which would contain eating facilities, libraries, and common rooms in addition to sleeping quarters. Alumni and trustee resistance to contributing funds for the destruction of the clubs, which continued to hold their loyalties, was responsible for the rejection of President Wilson's plan.

Still, changes were in the air, and within a very few years the freshman and sophomore eating clubs were abolished. Dean Allen quotes the observation of one "loyal club alumnus" regarding the class which entered Princeton the year of the abolition: "The remarkable unity developed by this group was no doubt due to the fact that they were not divided into small eating clubs in either of their first two years, and there were no colored-hat followings nor other outward markings to set one man apart from his brother."

The implications of this observation were not extended to the upper-class clubs, which continued to flourish. By 1917, more than half of the upperclassmen were members of one of the sixteen existing clubs. A petition signed that year by a large number of sophomores (led by Grover Cleveland's son) declared that none would join clubs as a matter of principle. The gesture represented a growing feeling of unease, but the proportion of students entering clubs continued to climb. In 1925, according to the *Alumni Weekly*, about 60 per cent of the upperclassmen joined some club; in 1930, it was more than two-thirds; in 1935, it was almost three-quarters; and in 1940, only 20 per cent of the upperclassmen were not in some eating club.

Exclusiveness became more obnoxious to the university authorities as it became less exclusive. When half of the university was made up of outsiders, there was no problem; when it was only one-fifth, it became a serious problem. The administration, which had traditionally taken an attitude of amiable non-interference toward the clubs, was now moved to act on behalf of the rejected 20 per cent. By exerting a dignified amount of discreet interference in club affairs in 1941, they were able to achieve the 100 per cent election of sophomores. There were many complaints. Alumni were particularly irritated at the 100 per cent philosophy, and they were joined by a minority of the student body. But the precedent had been set, and, possibly strengthened by wartime slogans, it was followed in 1942 and 1943. In 1944, the last year before the clubs were shut down for the duration of the war, 99.5 per cent of the eligibles were admitted.

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After the war and postwar commotion had subsided, the club issue was brought up again—this time by the sophomore class of 1949-50. In a move reminiscent of 1917, some 600 of its 750 members signed a petition resolving that no one would join any club unless every sophomore got a bid. Club leaders were annoyed at the coercion; alumni were indignant; the university administration sympathized with the principles of the petition, deplored the pressure, and avoided committing itself in public to anything. Despite the resentment, all sophomores got bids to clubs that year.

Each year after 1949, right up until 1958, the 100 per cent goal, quietly encouraged by the administration, was met. The clubs first went through their customary "bicker" period, at which desired members received their invitations. The remaining uninvited twenty to forty students would then be scattered among the clubs, either by a form of lottery or by the persuasive powers of sophomore leaders.

But the informal 100 per cent system pleased only the administration, which in this way was escaping responsibility for dealing with a complicated and potentially embarrassing situation. The "100-per-centers," those two or three dozen boys who became club members simply because the residue had to be disposed of, were in a painful position. During the bicker period, many tried to persuade athletic acquaintances to help them get into some club. Those who failed or who had no athletic acquaintances, were thrown upon the mercies of their social betters. The club officers who had been given the job of carrying out the unofficial university policy asked repeatedly for the establishment of alternative dining facilities. This would have freed them of the onus of providing for the socially unattractive and freed their members of the obligation to eat in the same room with a man just because he happened to have been admitted to Princeton. When this suggestion was put forward by the Inter-Club Committee Chairman in 1956—accompanied by a threat to hold a "natural" bicker, with no 100 per cent obligation—President Harold W. Dodds expressed his "confidence in the capacity of the undergraduates themselves to conduct club elections satisfactory to all. . . ." This reply was generally interpreted by students as throwing the ball back to them, and many expressed their discontent with what they felt was simple evasion.

In 1956, too, student spokesmen proposed setting up a new club which, it was feared, would almost certainly have become in effect a Jewish club, thus providing an excuse for the existing clubs to take in even fewer Jews. The establishment of Jewish fraternities at many universities has had precisely this effect. After some discussion, the plan for a new club, untempting as it was to most Jewish students, was shelved. Had it been adopted, Princeton might have been saved a good deal of unpleasantness, since the problem of discrimination would have been camouflaged. Instead of a new club, President Dodds sponsored a small campus dining room for those upperclassmen who did not desire to go through the rigors of bicker. Located on a separate part of campus, Woodrow Wilson Lodge was physically as well as spiritually removed from Princeton's social life and not destined to amount to very much.

Despite the nine consecutive years of 100 per cent bickers, everyone had realized for some time that the goal was becoming increasingly difficult of attainment. Perhaps the most important obstacle was the appearance of a far more diverse student body than Princeton had ever before known—or particularly wanted to know. The new kind of students were to play a large part in changing the emphasis of education at Princeton from the social to the intellectual. William P. Jacobs, who began teaching biology at the university soon after the war, recalls that he was startled by the sight of his first class: "It was like looking at a roomful of siblings." This soon began to change. For one thing, many more young men were getting a chance to go to a private college. From 1921 to 1941, reports a dean, "we were never forced to refuse admission to

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boys with good character testimonials and adequate scholastic preparation." (In those days, notes E. Digby Baltzell in *The Philadelphia Gentlemen,* Old Nassau was by far the most fashionable of the Ivy League schools among the Philadelphia upper strata.) In 1941, Princeton had only 795 completed applications for its 750 places; in 1957 it had about 3,400.

Although the sons of Princeton graduates are still highly favored by the admission procedures (about 75 per cent of those who apply are accepted compared to 40 per cent of the completed applications as a whole, and they make up more than 15 per cent of the entering class), the college today takes boys from a much wider geographical area, as well as many more products of public schools. While more than three-quarters of the 1941 entering class came from prep school, by 1953 the figure was down to a little over half. Princeton drew students from 210 schools in 1941 compared to 380 schools in 1953. Along with this trend has gone a rising percentage of Jewish undergraduates. Before the war, Princeton had the smallest proportion of Jews of any major Eastern college—only 2 per cent in 1936. Soon after the war it rose to 7 per cent, and at present Jews make up about 14 per cent of the student body—more than the average New England university.

Changes in attitudes have, not surprisingly, accompanied the change in make-up. In 1932, Professors Daniel Katz and K. W. Braly gave one hundred Princeton students a list of ten ethnic groups and asked them to check five attributes "most applicable" to each group. The students responded by placing the familiar labels in the familiar places, and the study was thereafter cited as "an example of the extent to which even college students subscribe to the stereotypes and prejudices current in our culture." In 1950, the same test was given to 333 students who had been born around 1932. Although certain stereotypes about Negroes and Jews were found to "persist to a fair degree," the conclusion was that "the present generation of college students is more reluctant than the previous generation to make stereotyped generalizations about the character of ethnic groups, especially those with whom they have little contact. Some students regard it as almost an insult to their intelligence to be required to make such generalizations while others do so with considerable reservations."

It is a truism that alumni tend to hold less advanced ideas in any given area than members of the current student body. Princeton alumni led the fight almost a century ago in favor of the fraternities, and vocal alumni opinion has been critical of the 100 per cent system which the majority of undergraduates have backed in spirit. Since they own the club buildings, contribute to their support, and, as graduate members, play a part in directing their operations, alumni opinion is not an academic matter. (Academic matters, by the way, seem to be a minor concern of those alumni who maintain their club ties into middle age and beyond.) In 1955, sixteen of the seventeen clubs supported a plan that would have assigned "leftover" sophomores to clubs on an equitable rotation basis; ten of the club alumni boards, however, were reported opposed to the idea. Until a few years ago, the alumni boards participated directly in the process of selecting members; this was ended by the administration.

Nor has alumni discontent in recent years been confined to the club system alone. There has been dissatisfaction as well with Princeton's changing admission standards, which have kept out some of the less gifted alumni offspring. A 1930 graduate whose son was refused admission concluded a lengthy letter to the *Alumni Weekly* with this threat: "If Princeton is to survive as a private institution, it is going to need money and plenty of it. Its major source of supply for that money will always be its alumni. Accordingly, it would be good judgment on the part of the staff to show a less condescending attitude toward the acceptance of alumni sons who measure up to reasonable admission standards and to go slow in

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reversing the policy of admitting a large percentage of preparatory school boys, which policy was followed . . . when most of the present alumni were at Princeton."

The man's point was well taken: Princeton is poorly endowed in comparison to Harvard and Yale—with about one-fourth of Harvard's and one-third of Yale's endowment. In any event, a reluctance to further affront already annoyed alumni has certainly played a part in the administration's cautious approach to the club system.

THIS then was the position at the beginning of bicker in February 1958. The social life of Princeton's upperclassmen was centered in seventeen eating clubs—which pursued none of the more famous pastimes of fraternities on other campuses, such as lethal initiations; nor did the boys sleep at their clubs. The spacious, elegantly appointed houses—mansions compared to the ordinary fraternity dwelling—did, however, serve as congregating places for members in their leisure hours. Parties, outings, sports events —all were organized through the clubs. They ranged from prestige-ful Ivy, whose president, Steven Rockefeller, son of Nelson, was also president of the Inter-Club Committee, to Prospect, a cooperative group, whose members waited on tables themselves. Ivy had two Jewish members—one of them captain of the lacrosse team. Prospect was half Jewish; its president, Myron Margolin.

While the social-athletic standards of Ivy, and perhaps two other prestige clubs, have kept most Princetonians from aspiring so high, and the undiscriminating policy of Prospect has offered little to any but the socially resigned, the large group of middling clubs in between has been vulnerable to the pressure for 100 per cent. These are the clubs which have felt a need for quotas to keep from becoming a repository for the sedentary studious from undistinguished homes, a group that includes many Jews. The dilemma is described by a former bicker chairman in *The Unsilent Generation*,* edited by Otto Butz, an assistant professor at Princeton, which contains the confessions and life views of eleven seniors:

> The class of 1959 at Princeton, which we were considering in the club elections, had the distinction, I understand, of having more Jews in it and proportionately fewer prep-school graduates than any other class in Princeton's history. While I do have a distinct preference for prep-school graduates, many of my friends are not from prep school and I am not strongly opinionated on the subject. Similarly, I have many Jewish friends and am not personally prejudiced against Jews except in the realm of international politics. But as club Bicker chairman I was faced with a deplorable situation. According to Princeton's social standards, there were appallingly few "good men" available. The "name" of one's club depends in large measure upon the number of prep-school graduates and tweed-clad extroverts that are among its members. The Princeton club is primarily for the social side of life. There is no room for the nondrinker, the silent introvert, or the man who spends so much time on studies that he neglects the social life which is so much a part of college. Whatever my personal prejudice, or lack of it, I had to resist the admission to the club of those types who by the accepted traditional standards were not suitable for a social organization. Such persons were generally brilliant high-school graduates who had to combat the handicap of inadequate secondary-school preparation by concentrating on academic work to the exclusion of most other pursuits. Even the so-called prejudice against Jews, I found, was not so much an opposition to them as such, as to the fact that most of them (either because they were "grinds" or because they felt ill at ease among prep-school socialites) were simply poor mixers and did not fit well into a purely social organization.

Jewish members have themselves often proved to be as eager as their non-Jewish fellows to prevent their clubs from acquiring the "Jewish club" label which stigmatizes Prospect. One club reportedly adopted a "buddy system," whereby a Jewish student would be admitted only if he brought along a non-Jewish friend. It is widely, and openly, acknowledged that in this year's bicker five clubs set more or less rigid quotas. The president of one such club justified the practice as follows: "A quota, when fairly applied,

*Rinehart, 188 pp., $2.95.

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is only an approximation; it is not a fixed number or percentage. It is a flexible guide designed to prevent a disproportionate concentration of one minority group in one club. I do not believe that a club which uses a flexible quota to insure that its sections will include a cross-section of the sophomore class should be condemned for discriminatory practices. An all-Jewish club is the worst possible thing which could happen at Princeton. Christian and Jewish students realize this."

In a reply to this position, a prominent Jewish senior pointed out that no quota had ever been applied to other sorts of minorities, such as athletes or Southerners, that few clubs approximate a cross-section of the student body, and that quota systems, in fact, serve to encourage the formation of an all-Jewish club, made up of rejects.

The club president countered, somewhat apologetically, that the clubs with quotas were possibly the least discriminatory: they, at any rate, were considering enough Jews as potential members to be concerned over the danger of becoming predominantly Jewish.

The dispute remains unresolved, but as the quotas have worked out in practice they have been well below the percentage of Jewish students at the university; the latter have thus been competing among themselves to gain admission to some dining room other than Prospect's.

Considering the strength of the alumni pressures to maintain social standards as opposed to the changing composition of the Princeton class and its attitudes, it is a tribute to student and administration powers of manipulation that 100 per cent was obtained for nine bickers in a row. But the times were clearly against its continuance.

THE shot that blew up the 100 per cent goal for 1958 was fired by Prospect president Myron Margolin. He declared at the beginning of the bicker period that Prospect would this year be open to all students. This apparently generous measure was a move in Margolin's avowed intention to break the bicker system. His announcement gave the Inter-Club Committee, made up of the seventeen club presidents, who effectively control their respective constituencies, the opportunity to shed the 100 per cent burden —or so it seemed. Steven Rockefeller, acting for the club presidents, lost no time in declaring that every sophomore had now received a bid to a club since Prospect would take all those whom the other clubs did not; hence, 100 per cent had been achieved automatically, without the need for any persuasion. A different interpretation, however, was put forward by Margolin. He said his club was now open to students who "wish to join"; those who did not wish to join could not, in all justice, be said to have received a legitimate bid. The ICC responded that in its eyes a bid was a bid, and any students who did not take advantage of the Prospect invitation could eat at Wilson Lodge, the notably unsociable university facility.

Thus, this year's bicker started out in a more confusing way than usual. Bicker, which takes up two weeks in February, is always a strenuous time at Princeton. As Dean Allen has observed, "Tension is high and academic work low during bicker weeks." Committees from all the clubs visit sophomores in their rooms. The young eligibles, freshly showered and shaved, stand inspection for height, good posture, poise, an outgoing—but not offensively outgoing—personality, and related traits. No bidding is permitted until the last three nights of bicker, but there is a considerable amount of behind-the-scenes jostling and maneuvering by club officers to obtain the most desirable young men for their dining rooms.

Most sophomores get a fair notion of their fate quite early, from the frequency and duration of the committee visits. One rejected student describes his feelings: "You sit around waiting for the people from the eating clubs to come to see you and decide if they want you. If a club's interested, they send one person after another to interview you. If no club is interested no one comes and you know you're not wanted."

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Just getting a bid, while it might be an accomplishment for a Jewish or an unassuming non-Jewish student, is not always enough for one who sets a high estimate on his own social standing. As one present senior has written of his experience: "The club that I wanted was the one that had the reputation for the best bunch of drinkers and for the group of men who were the most amusingly vulgar. . . . Yet when the 'Hour of Truth' arrived, they extended me no bid. I did receive an acceptance but it was from another club further down the hierarchy. The club of my first choice had not wanted me! The whole experience was a trauma."

As BICKER drew to an end with the Margolin-Rockefeller controversy over semantics still unsettled, tempers began to warm up. James F. Ridgeway, chairman of the *Daily Princetonian* (a position equivalent to editor-in-chief) laid blame for the situation on the ICC and warned Prospect not to become a scapegoat for the sins of the other clubs. He wanted to make certain the responsibility for 100 per cent still rested with all the seventeen clubs, not just one. This editorial brought about an ICC decision to "ignore" the *Daily Princetonian* thereafter. Steven Rockefeller accused the paper's editors of taking a "negative," "critical" attitude toward the ICC, of not striving to "cooperate." The ICC, he told them, could carry out a more successful bicker without their assistance. Harassed as he was by circumstances, Rockefeller may be forgiven for committing the naive public relations man's error of trying to put an end to a disagreeable affair by putting an end to newspaper stories and comment about it. In any event the stories continued.

"Open House," the final bidding period of the bicker, took place on Saturday and Sunday, February 8 and 9. Late Saturday afternoon, Rockefeller told a special sophomore class meeting that despite signs of difficulty in attaining 100 per cent, the goal could still be reached—if everyone cooperated with the ICC. The call for cooperation was interpreted widely as a plea to the "100-per-centers" to settle for Prospect.

At 7:30 P.M. the clubs opened their doors to receive the fortunate sophomores who had been placed. "For the unsuccessful ones," wrote a *Princetonian* reporter, "things became more and more tense as they went from one club to another to see how they stood." At around nine, the unplaced sophomores began to gather on the back porch of the Ivy Club, while the ICC met within, trying to work out a solution. There were forty-two men without bids on the first count. Shortly after 11 P.M., Dean of Students William D'O. Lippincott, '41, who had helped to engineer the 100 per cent successes in past years, arrived. By midnight, five 100-per-centers were in the clubs.

"For the rest of the group, though," the *Princetonian* report continues, "it was a sad evening. Instead of the happy section parties going on at the other clubs, the men on the porch were talking in subdued tones to each other and to friends. Most of the coffee and sandwiches that the club provided were eaten by people helping out. The men without bids were not hungry." After a *Harvard Crimson* reporter was discovered on the porch, with a camera, the "central headquarters committee" ordered the doors closed. "This immediately gave rise to the idea that the porch was a 'cage.' Even the men not in clubs began referring to themselves as 'cagers.'"

Sometime during the night at least one Jewish 100-per-center was told: "We'd love to have you, but our quota is filled," and at midnight about a dozen of the remaining thirty-seven sophomores presented a written protest to the ICC, claiming that they were being railroaded into Prospect because of racial discrimination against them in the other clubs. Rockefeller, who is said to have been the most strenuous battler for 100 per cent during the entire affair, reportedly used this accusation to spur his fellow members of ICC to work harder to get everyone into a club. But two hours later, the ICC, which met almost continuously through the night, replied that "racial or religious discrimination by one club—even if proved—

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was no reason for refusing a bid from another." At 2:10 A.M., the head of the Sophomore Bicker Committee came down to the dining room, to which the thirty-seven leftovers had been moved when the porch grew too cold. "Open House has been suspended indefinitely," he told them. "The ICC will take no responsibility for those who have refused to take bids to Prospect. They consider any reasons for refusing as invalid." (Fourteen of the men either found belated places in one of the clubs or went tiredly to Prospect or Wilson Lodge, thus leaving the unclubbed number at twenty-three. One more disappeared in the following days—it is rumored that he transferred to Harvard—bringing the final total of clubless men to twenty-two.)

HAVING thus dismissed the students, the ICC officials went on to issue two more statements which, conceived of necessity and phrased in weariness, had a ring of honesty about them. After denying that the failure of 100 per cent was "necessarily" their fault, they went on: "It is wrong to admit boys to Princeton and to lead them to believe that they have a right to join selective organizations. The idealism of 100 per cent is just this. It has raised aspirations and expectations only to have them trampled upon and turned into discouragement, bitterness, and suffering. Selectivity is not necessarily wrong. One hundred per cent is not wrong. But the present system of club selectivity with no acceptable alternative plus 100 per cent is wrong. In other words, 100 per cent has led to the false assumption that everyone has the right to membership in a selective organization; and this is a false assumption because 100 per cent is incompatible with the exclusive nature of Princeton's selective upper-class eating clubs."

In a third statement, the club presidents took up the accusation of discrimination: "The ICC recognizes the right of every club to be selective. Selectivity implies the right of a club to impose a religious quota if it so desires. The ICC does not approve of religious and racial discrimination, but has no power to control the bicker policy of individual clubs. Ultimate responsibility for religious and racial discrimination rests with individual members of the individual clubs."

The Undergraduate Council, the Student Christian Association, and several students and faculty members responded by denouncing religious discrimination. Steven Rockefeller termed the whole situation "regrettable." Robert F. Goheen, serving his first year as Princeton's president, said he had heard allegations of discrimination and that he deplored the practice. He pointed to the "important contribution" which the clubs make to the university by permitting "men having common interests . . . [to] dine together and enjoy the society of their fellows in congenial groups of relatively small size." On the other hand, he acknowledged that "excessive disruption occurs . . . when membership or lack of membership in clubs becomes an all-absorbing and overriding concern."

On February 22, President Goheen spoke at the first annual meeting of the National Alumni Association to be held since he took office. He offered plans there for the construction of an integrated group of buildings which would provide dormitory rooms for 600 students, apartments for single faculty members, dining and social facilities for about 250 students, a library, and recreation rooms. Although alumni enthusiasm has still to prove itself with the cash for the project, student response has been universally favorable. Once there is an adequate alternative to the clubs, it is felt by some at least, they can be as selective and as exclusive as they like with no qualms of conscience; no student need henceforth be an outsider.

Certainly, once the club monopoly on social life is broken, the cruelty of discrimination will be mitigated. Moreover, the ICC, led by Steven Rockefeller, has now altered its position on quotas and has accepted responsibility for the elimination of discrimination from all clubs. And the administration has endorsed the new stand. At the very least, it is hoped, this year's unpleasant end-of-bicker scene will not be repeated.

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But the attitudes revealed in the recent commotion will not be changed quickly. One of the contributors to *The Unsilent Generation* writes, without irony:

> In the exclusive suburb of the Midwestern metropolis where we live . . . there are no business buildings, stores, gas stations, or anything else which might detract from the beauty of the well-tended homes. We have no police force, fire department or city government of any form. Our informal town commission has stipulated that in the deed of every home there be a clause which obligates the owner not to sell his property to a Negro or Jew. My parents belong to the country club, the athletic club, the university club, and other social organizations whose membership is restricted to the acceptable people in the area. Until I went to preparatory school I had never really known any Jewish individuals. I had gathered that they were the sort of people one stayed away from.

A HIGH proportion of Princeton's undergraduates continue to come from a similar background, and for these boys the dining clubs provide a spirit very like the one in which they grew up. The reason they hesitate to admit Jews into this environment is their belief that most Jews come from different sorts of homes. This is not really accurate when applied to Princeton's Jewish students, but the prevalent feeling is that they are "grinds"—overstudious, unpoised, ill-trained in the social graces, and so on: they would not contribute to the club spirit; they would be uncomfortable among the socially more adept students and would, in turn, make everyone else somewhat uncomfortable. The bias is as much an expression of anti-intellectualism as of anti-Jewishness. About seventy-five Jewish sophomores did join clubs this year; of sixteen National Merit Scholarship winners, seven were not accepted by any club.

That boys in their late teens and early twenties should seek in college the kind of companions they have known all their lives is not astonishing. Nor is the fact that although most proclaim the benefits of a Princeton education, in their social affairs they seek reassurance rather than experiment. As the bicker chairman quoted above writes:

> It is possible, I feel, that the club system, whatever its inherent evils, has a greater place at Princeton than the brilliant but colorless and socially ill-at-ease individual who spends his four college years closeted in a library or laboratory. It may sound snobbish to say it, but I think the university should remember the types who have given it not only its support but also its honored name. To me, the "country club" appellation sometimes flung at Princeton is no more than the envious viciousness of the socially self-conscious individual who resents the idea that you can be superbly educated and have fun with your friends at the same time.

(On his first contact with students from state universities during a Naval ROTC cruise, this fellow found them to be "hulking denizens . . . narrow-minded, humorless, unreasonably contemptuous of Ivy Leaguers, incapable of deep thought and above all boring." After getting to know them better, he decided they were "more cosmopolitan and personally less dull." He adds: "It seems strange that one must learn to get along with fellow Americans, but that was my problem. . . .")

Jewish students, then—along with some others—have been discriminated against not so much because they were born Jews but because they were raised in poorer families, less firmly established in America, with values and ways different from those of the traditional Princetonian. Nobody hates Jews at Princeton; perhaps no one even positively dislikes them. Campus opinion seems agreed that the existing club system is unfair. Even the head of the Graduate Interclub Council, who left Princeton forty years ago, believes that the clubs should "select congenial men without regard to race or religion." It is just that Jews—particularly those from New York City with high I.Q.'s and unfashionable tastes in dress—have the reputation of being less congenial than non-Jews.

Whatever the cause, some Jewish sophomores are out of the social swim, and it hurts. Just as it would take an unusual man bearing the name Rockefeller not to be re-

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ceived into Ivy, so it takes an unusual man of any name not to want to be a member of some club. "You have to care," one of the Jewish students told a newspaper reporter. "This is the social system at Princeton. If you're not in a club, you've been rejected. You've got a stigma attached to you."

This nineteen-year-old boy who had to care was probably hurt more severely than he would have been at one of the other Ivy League schools. A Harvard undergraduate, for example, reporting on the 1958 bicker in a *Harvard Crimson* article entitled "The Quest at Princeton for the Cocktail Soul," summed up his view of the affair as follows: "An outsider observing Bicker finds it difficult to take the whole thing seriously. The enormous anxieties generated in every member of the sophomore class, the superficiality and downright silliness of its standards and ceremonies, the blatant injustices of the values and principles the system inculcates—all would seem ludicrous in any civilized community, but they are doubly comic when set in one of the nation's greatest universities and practiced by what is supposed to be a substantial segment of this generation's intellectual elite."

These sentiments are probably shared by a great many Princeton students, but they are in a sense trapped by their school's past reputation. Princeton's social machinery is a legacy of the days when it was primarily a college for a social elite. This has changed, and is continuing to change. Princeton is well along now in the process of shedding its reputation as an institution devoted to the good social life and has become a first-rate place of learning. The 1955 graduate who recently defended the free, all-holds-barred bicker, on the ground that it would help accustom students to the realities of competitive selection early in life, was misreading his realities. The club machinery is no longer suitable for most of the young men it must serve, or for their world, and the administration is now pledged to renovate it. In three or four years, if plans go on schedule, Princeton will more accurately reflect the larger American society.

As for the boys who were hurt, they of course arouse sympathy, but in part, too, their pain comes from a too-ready acceptance of the club system's own values. As another of *The Unsilent Generation* contributors, a Catholic, writes:

> Sophomore year I joined an eating club. I found out a lot about myself that I had been blind to since arriving at Princeton. I was not a Joe College. I still lacked the polish of my contemporaries. . . . The exclusive clubs wouldn't look at me. I was not tweedy, I realized. I was not smooth. . . . I joined a club of no particular distinction. . . . Something was wrong with me. . . .

Nineteen-year-old boys should not be put to a test where the odds are all against them. But if, along with the pain, some of the rejected students—Jews and non-Jews—draw the strength to resist values which go so ill with the ideals of a university and of the nation as a whole, and conclude that something is wrong with the system rather than with themselves, perhaps they will have gotten an unlooked-for increment from their Princeton education.

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BEHOLD THE KEY

A Story

BERNARD MALAMUD

ONE beautiful late-autumn day in Rome, Carl Schneider, a graduate student in Italian studies at Columbia University, left a real estate agent's office after a depressing morning of apartment hunting and walked up Via Veneto, feeling a deepening sense of disappointment in finding himself so dissatisfied in this city of his dreams. He felt unpleasantly lonely for the first time since he had been married, and found himself desiring the lovely Italian women he passed in the street, especially the few who looked as if they also had money. He had been a damned fool, he thought, to come here with so little of it in his pocket.

He had, last spring, been turned down for a Fulbright fellowship and had had no peace with himself until he decided to go to Rome anyway, to do his Ph.D. on the Risorgimento, from firsthand sources, at the same time enjoying Italy. This plan had for years aroused his happiest expectations. Norma thought he was crazy to want to take off with two kids under six and all their savings—$3,600, most of it earned by her—but Carl argued that people had to do something different with their lives occasionally or they went to pot. He was twenty-eight—his years weighed on him—and she was thirty, and when else could they go if not now? He was confident, since he knew the language, that they could get settled satisfactorily in a short time. Norma had her doubts. It all came to nothing until her mother, a widow, offered to pay their passage across; then Norma said yes, though still with misgiving.

"We've read prices are terrible in Rome. How do we know we'll get along on what we have?"

"You have to take a chance once in a while," said Carl.

"Up to a point, with two kids," Norma replied; but she took the chance and they sailed out of season—the sixteenth of October, arriving in Naples on the twenty-sixth and going on at once to Rome, in the hope they would save money if they found an apartment quickly, though Norma wanted to see Capri, and Carl would have liked to spend a little time in Pompeii.

In Rome, though Carl had no trouble getting around or making himself understood, they had immediate rough going trying to locate an inexpensive furnished flat. They had figured on a two-bedroom apartment, Carl to work in theirs; or one bedroom and a large maid's room where the kids would sleep. Although they searched across the city they could locate nothing decent within their means, fifty to fifty-five thousand lire a month, a top of about ninety dollars. Carl turned up some inexpensive places but in hopeless Trastevere sections; elsewhere there was always some other fatal flaw: no heat, missing bedroom furniture, sometimes no running water or sanitation.

To make bad worse, during their second week at the dark little *pensione* where they were staying, the children developed nasty intestinal disorders, little Mike having to be carried to the bathroom ten times one memorable night, and Christine running a temperature of 105; so Norma, who didn't trust the milk or cleanliness of the *pensione*,

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BERNARD MALAMUD'S two novels, *The Natural* (1953) and *The Assistant* (1957), as well as his short stories in COMMENTARY and other magazines (collected in *The Magic Barrel*, to be published this month by Farrar, Straus and Cudahy), have established him as one of the leading writers of fiction in this country. He has just won the annual Rosenthal Award of the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

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suggested they would be better off in a hotel. When Christine's fever abated they moved into the Sora Cecilia, a second-class *albergo* recommended by a Fulbright fellow they had met. It was a four-story building full of high-ceilinged, boxlike rooms. The toilets were in the hall, but the rent was comparatively low. About the only other virtue of the place was that it was near the Piazza Navone, a lovely 17th-century square, surrounded by many magnificently picturesque, warm-colored houses. Within the piazza three fountains played, whose water and sculpture Carl and Norma enjoyed, but which they soon became insensible to during their sad little walks with the kids, as the days passed and they still found themselves homeless.

CARL had in the beginning avoided the real estate agents to save the commission—five per cent of the full year's rent; but when he gave in and visited their offices they said it was too late to get anything at the price he wanted to pay.

"You should have come in July," an agent said.

"I'm here now."

He threw up his hands. "Who can make miracles? Better to pay seventy-five thousand and so live comfortable like most Americans."

"I can't afford it, not with heat extra."

"Then you will sit out the winter in the hotel."

"I appreciate your concern." Carl left, embittered.

However, they sometimes called him to witness an occasional "miracle." One man showed him a pleasant apartment overlooking some prince or other's formal garden. The rent was sixty thousand, and Carl would have taken it had he not later learned from the tenant next door—he had returned because he distrusted the agent—that the flat was heated electrically, which would cost twenty thousand a month over the sixty thousand rent. Another "miracle" was the offer by this agent's cousin of a single studio room on the Via Margutta, for forty thousand. And from time to time a lady agent called Norma to tell her about this miraculous place in the Parioli: eight stunning rooms, three bedrooms, double service, American-style kitchen with refrigerator, garage—marvelous for an American family: price, two hundred thousand.

"Please, no more," Norma begged.

"I'll go mad," said Carl. He was nervous over the way time was going, almost a month, he having given none of it to his work. And Norma, washing the kids' things in the hotel sink, in an unheated, cluttered room, was obviously unhappy. Furthermore, the hotel bill last week had come to twenty thousand lire, and it was costing them two thousand more a day to eat badly, even though Norma was cooking the children's food on a hotplate they had bought.

"Carl, maybe I'd better go to work?"

"I'm tired of your working. You'll have no fun."

"What fun am I having? All I've seen is the Colosseum." She then suggested they might rent an unfurnished flat and build their own furniture.

"Where would I get the tools? And what about the cost of wood in a country where it's cheaper to lay down marble floors? And who'll do my reading for me while I'm building and finishing the stuff?"

"All right," Norma said. "Forget I said anything."

"What about taking a seventy-five thousand place but staying for only five or six months?" Carl asked.

"Can you get your research done in five or six months?"

"No."

"I thought your research was the main reason we came here." Norma then said she wished she had never heard of Italy.

"That's enough of that," Carl said.

He felt helpless, blamed himself for coming—bringing all this on Norma and the kids. He didn't understand why things did not go right—why his luck was so bad. He feared a great loss, the death of his dream—disenchantment with Italy, unless they quickly found an apartment.

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At the Porta Pinciana, near the tram, Carl felt himself tapped on the shoulder. A bushy-haired Italian, clutching a worn briefcase, was standing in the sun on the sidewalk. His hair rose in all directions. His eyes were gentle; not sad, but they had been. He wore a clean white shirt, rag of a tie, and a black jacket that had crawled a little up his back. His trousers were of denim, and his porous, sharp-pointed shoes, neatly shined, were summer shoes.

"Excuse me," he said with an uneasy smile. "I am Vasco Bevilacqua. Weesh you an apotament?"

"How did you know?" Carl said, surprised.

"I follow you," the Italian answered, making a gesture in the air, "when you leave the agencia. I am myself agencia. I like to help Americans. They are wonderful people."

"You're a real estate agent?"

"Eet is just."

"Parliamo italiano?"

"You spik?" He seemed disappointed. "Ma non é italiano?"

Carl told him he was an American student of Italian history and culture, and had studied the language for years.

Bevilacqua then explained that, although he had no regular office, nor, for that matter, a car, he had managed to collect several exclusive listings. He had got these, he said, from friends who knew he was starting a business, and they made it a habit to inform him of apartments recently vacated in their buildings or those of friends, for which service he of course tipped them out of his commissions. The regular agents, he went on, demanded a heartless five per cent. He requested only three. He charged less because his expenses, frankly, were low, and also because of his great affection for Americans. He then asked Carl how many rooms he was looking for and what he was willing to pay.

Carl hesitated. The man, though pleasant, was no bona fide agent, probably had no license. He had heard about these two-bit operators and was about to say he wasn't interested, but Bevilacqua's eyes pleaded with him not to say it.

Carl figured he had nothing to lose. Maybe he does have a place I might be interested in. He told the Italian what he was looking for and how much he expected to pay.

Bevilacqua's face lit up. "In weech zone do you seek?" he asked with emotion.

"Any place fairly decent," Carl answered in Italian. "It doesn't have to be perfect."

"Not the Parioli?"

"Not the Parioli only. It would depend on the rent."

Bevilacqua held his briefcase between his knees and fished in his pocket. He drew out a sheet of very thin paper, unfolded it, and read the penciled writing, with wrinkled brows. After a while he thrust the paper back into his shirt pocket and retrieved his briefcase.

"Let me have your telephone number," he said in Italian. "I will examine my other listings and give you a ring."

"Listen," Carl said, "if you've got a good place to show me, all right. If not, please don't waste my time."

Bevilacqua looked hurt. "I give you my word," he said, placing his big hand on his chest, "tomorrow you will have your apartment. May my mother give birth to a goat if I fail you."

He put down in a little book where Carl was staying. "I'll be over at thirteen sharp to show you some marvelous places," he said.

"Can't you make it in the morning?"

Bevilacqua was apologetic. "My hours are now from thirteen to sixteen." He said he hoped to expand his time later, and Carl guessed he was working his real estate venture during his lunch and siesta time, probably from some underpaid clerk's job.

He said he would expect him at thirteen sharp.

Bevilacqua, his expression now become so serious he seemed to be listening to it, bowed, and walked away in his funny shoes.

He showed up at the hotel at ten to two, wearing a small black fedora, his hair beaten down with pomade whose odor sprang into the lobby. Carl was waiting restlessly near the desk, fighting doubts that he would show up, when Bevilacqua came run-

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ning through the door, clutching his briefcase.

"Ready?" he asked breathlessly.

"Since one o'clock," Carl answered.

"Ah, that's what comes of not owning your own car," Bevilacqua explained. "My bus had a flat tire."

Carl looked at him but the face was deadpan. "Well, let's get on," he said.

"I have three places to show you." Bevilacqua told him the first address, a two-bedroom apartment at just fifty thousand.

ON THE bus they clung to straps in a tight crowd, the Italian raising himself on his toes and looking around at every stop to see where they were. Twice he asked Carl the time, and when Carl told him, his lips moved soundlessly. After a time Bevilacqua roused himself, smiled, and remarked, "What do you think of Marilyn Monroe?"

"I haven't much thought of her," Carl said.

Bevilacqua seemed puzzled. "Don't you go to the movies?"

"Once in a while."

The Italian made a short speech on the glory of American films. "In Italy they always make us look at what we have just lived through." He fell into silence again. Carl noticed that he was holding in his hand a wooden figurine of a hunchback with a high hat, whose poor gobbo he was rubbing with his thumb, for luck.

"For us both," Carl thought. He was still restless, still worried.

But their luck was nil at the first place, an ochre-colored house behind an iron gate.

"Third floor?" Carl asked, after the unhappy realization that he had been here before.

"Exactly. How did you guess?"

"I've seen the apartment," he muttered gloomily. He remembered having answered an ad. If that was how Bevilacqua got his listings, they might as well quit now.

"But what's wrong with it?" the Italian asked, visibly disappointed.

"Bad heating."

"How is that possible?"

"They have a single gas heater in the living room but nothing in the bedrooms. They were supposed to have steam heat installed in the building in September, but the contract fell through when the price of steam pipe went up. With two kids, I wouldn't want to spend the winter in a cold flat."

"Cretins," muttered Bevilacqua. "The portiere said the heat was perfect."

He consulted his paper. "I have a place in the Prati district, two fine bedrooms and combined living and dining room. Also an American-type refrigerator in the kitchen."

"Has the apartment been advertised in the papers?"

"Absolutely no. My cousin called me about this one last night—but the rent is fifty-five thousand."

"Let's see it anyway," Carl said.

It was an old house, formerly a villa, which had been cut up into apartments. Across the street stood a little park with tall, tufted pine trees, just the thing for the kids. Bevilacqua located the portiere, who led them up the stairs, all the while saying how good the flat was. Although Carl discovered at once that there was no hot water in the kitchen sink and it would have to be carried in from the bathroom, the flat made a good impression on him. But then in the master bedroom he noticed that one wall was wet and there was a disagreeable odor in the room.

The portiere quickly explained that a water pipe had burst in the wall, but they would have it fixed in a week.

"It smells more like a sewer pipe," said Carl.

"But they will have it repaired this week," Bevilacqua said.

"I couldn't live a week with that smell in the room."

"You mean you are not interested in the apartment?" the Italian said fretfully.

Carl nodded. Bevilacqua's face fell. He blew his nose and they left the house. Outside he regained his calm. "You can't trust your own mother nowadays. I called the portiere this morning and he guaranteed me the house was without a fault."

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"He must have been kidding you."

"It makes no difference. I have an exceptional place in mind for you now, but we've got to hurry."

Carl half-heartedly asked where it was.

The Italian was embarrassed. "In the Parioli, a wonderful section, as you know. Your wife won't have to look far for friends—there are Americans all over. Also Japanese and Indians, if you have international tastes."

"The Parioli," Carl muttered. "How much?"

"Only sixty-five thousand," Bevilacqua said, staring at the ground.

"Only? Still, it must be a dump at that price."

"It's really very nice—new, with a good-size nuptial bedroom and one small, besides the usual things, including a fine kitchen. You will personally love the magnificent terrace."

"Have you seen the place?"

"I spoke to the maid and she says the owner is very anxious to rent. They are moving, for business reasons, to Turin next week. The maid is an old friend of mine. She swears the place is perfect."

Carl considered it. Sixty-five thousand meant close to a hundred and five dollars. "Well," he said after a while, "let's have a look at it."

They caught a tram and found seats together, Bevilacqua impatiently glancing out of the window whenever they stopped. On the way he told Carl about his hard life. He was the eighth of twelve children, only five now alive. Nobody was really ever not hungry, though they ate spaghetti by the bucketful. He had to leave school at ten and go to work. In the war he was wounded twice, once by the Americans advancing, and once by the Germans retreating. His father was killed in an Allied bombardment of Rome, the same that had cracked open his mother's grave in the Cimitero Verano.

"The British pinpointed their targets," he said, "but the Americans dropped bombs everywhere. This was the advantage of your great wealth."

Carl said he was sorry about the bombardments.

"Nevertheless, I like the Americans better," Bevilacqua went on. "They are more like Italians. That's why I like to help them when they come here. The British are more closed. They talk with tight lips." He made noises with tight lips.

As they were walking towards Piazza Euclide, he asked Carl if he had an American cigarette on him.

"I don't smoke," Carl said apologetically.

Bevilacqua shrugged and walked faster.

The house he took Carl to was a new one on Via Archimede, an attractive street that wound up and around a hill. It was crowded with long-balconied apartment buildings in bright colors. Carl thought he would be happy to live in one of them. It was a short thought, he wouldn't let it grow too long.

They rode up to the fifth floor, and the maid, a dark girl with fuzzy cheeks and arms, showed them through the apartment.

"Is sixty-five thousand correct?" Carl asked her.

She said yes.

The flat was so good that Carl, moved by elation and fear, began to pray.

"I told you you'd like it," Bevilacqua said, rubbing his palms. "I'll draw up the contract tonight."

"Let's see the bedroom now," Carl said.

But first the maid led them onto a broad terrace to show them the view of the city. The sight excited Carl—the variety of architecture from ancient to modern times, where history had been and still, in its own aftermath, sensuously flowed. This marvelous city, Carl thought. He felt on the verge of an unexpected victory.

"Now the bedroom," he said.

"Yes, the bedroom." The maid led them through double doors into the "nuptial chamber," spacious, and tastefully furnished, containing handsome mahogany twin beds.

"They'll do," Carl said, speaking quickly to hide his joy, "though I personally prefer a double bed."

"I also," said the maid, "but you can move one in."

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"These will do."

"But they won't be here," she said.

"What do you mean they won't be here?" Bevilacqua demanded.

"Nothing will be left. Everything goes to Turin."

Carl's hopes took a long dive into a dirty cellar.

Bevilacqua flung his hat on the floor, landed on it with both feet and punched himself on the head with his fists.

The maid swore she had told him on the phone that the apartment was for rent unfurnished.

He began to yell at her and she shouted back. Carl left, broken-backed. Bevilacqua caught up with him in the street. It was a quarter to four and he had to rush off to work. He held his hat and ran down the hill.

"I weel show you a terreefic place tomorrow," he called over his shoulder.

"Over my dead body," said Carl.

On the way to the hotel he was drenched in a heavy rainfall, the first of many in the late autumn.

THE next morning the hotel phone rang at seven-thirty. The children awoke, Mike crying. Carl, dreading the day, groped for the ringing phone. Outside it was still raining.

"Pronto."

It was a cheery Bevilacqua. "I call you from my job. I 'ave found for you an apotament een weech you can move tomorrow if you like."

"Go to hell."

"Cosa?"

"Why do you call so early? You woke the children."

"Excuse me," Bevilacqua said in Italian. "I wanted to give you the good news."

"What goddamn good news?"

"I have found a first-class apartment for you near the Monte Sacro. It has only one bedroom but also a combined living and dining room with a double day bed, and a glass-enclosed terrace studio for your studies, and a small maid's room. There is no garage but you have no car. Price forty-five thousand—less than you expected. The apartment is on the ground floor and there is also a garden for your children to play in. Your wife will go crazy when she sees it."

"So will I," Carl said. "Is it furnished?"

Bevilacqua coughed. "Of course."

"Of course. Have you been there?"

He cleared his throat. "Not yet. I just discovered it this minute. The secretary of my office, Mrs. Gaspari, told me about it. The apartment is directly under hers. She will make a wonderful neighbor for you. I will come to your hotel precisely at thirteen and a quarter."

"Give yourself time. Make it fourteen."

"You will be ready?"

"Yes."

But when he had hung up his feeling of dread had grown. He felt afraid to leave the hotel and confessed this to Norma.

"Would you like me to go this time?" she asked.

He considered it but said no.

"Poor Carl."

"'The great adventure.'"

"Don't be bitter. It makes me miserable."

They had breakfast in the room—tea, bread and jam, fruit. They were cold, but there was to be no heat, it said on a card tacked on the door, until December. Norma put sweaters on the kids. Both had colds. Carl opened a book but could not concentrate and settled for *Il Messaggero*. Norma telephoned the lady agent; she said she would ring her back when there was something new to show.

Bevilacqua called up from the lobby at one-forty.

"Coming," Carl said, his heart heavy.

The Italian was standing in wet shoes near the door. He held his briefcase and a dripping large umbrella, but had left his hat home. Even in the damp his bushy hair stood upright. He looked slightly miserable.

They left the hotel, Bevilacqua walking quickly by Carl's side, maneuvering to keep the umbrella over both of them. On the Piazza Navona a woman was feeding a dozen stray cats in the rain. She had spread a news-

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paper on the ground, and the cats were grabbing hard strings of last night's macaroni. Carl felt the recurrence of his loneliness.

A packet of garbage thrown out of a window hit their umbrella and bounced off. The garbage spilled on the ground. A white-faced man, staring out of a third-floor window, pointed to the cats. Carl shook his fist at him.

Bevilacqua was moodily talking about himself. "In eight years of hard work I advanced myself only from thirty-thousand lire to fifty-five thousand a month. The cretin who sits on my left in the office has his desk at the door and makes forty thousand extra in tips just to give callers an appointment with the big boss. If I had that desk I would double what he takes in."

"Have you thought of changing jobs?"

"Certainly, but I could never start at the salary I am now earning. And there are twenty people who will jump into my job at half the pay."

"Tough," Carl said.

"For every piece of bread, we have twenty open mouths. You Americans are the lucky ones."

"Yes, in that way."

"In what way no?"

"We have no piazzas."

Bevilacqua shrugged a shoulder. "Can you blame me for wanting to advance myself?"

"Of course not. I wish you the best."

"I wish the best to all Americans," Bevilacqua declared. "I like to help them."

"And I to all Italians and pray them to let me live among them for a while."

"Today it will be arranged. Tomorrow you will move in. I feel luck in my bones. My wife kissed St. Peter's toe yesterday."

Traffic was heavy, a stream of gnats—Vespas, Fiats, Renaults—roared at them from both directions, nobody slowing down to let them cross. They plowed across dangerously. At the bus stop the crowd rushed for the doors when the bus swerved to the curb. It moved away with its rear door open, four people hanging onto the step.

I can do as well in Times Square, Carl thought.

In a half hour, after a short walk from the bus stop, they arrived at a broad, tree-lined street. Bevilacqua pointed to a yellow apartment house on the corner they were coming to. All over it were terraces, the ledges loaded with flower pots and stone boxes dropping ivy over the walls. Carl would not allow himself to think the place had impressed him.

Bevilacqua nervously rang the portiere's bell. He was again rubbing the hunchback's gobbo. A thick-set man in a blue smock came up from the basement. His face was heavy and he wore a full black mustache. Bevilacqua gave him the number of the apartment they wanted to see.

"Ah, there I can't help you," said the portiere. "I haven't got the key."

"Here we go again," Carl said.

"Patience," Bevilacqua counseled. He spoke to the portiere in a dialect Carl couldn't follow. The portiere made a long speech in the same dialect.

"Come upstairs," said Bevilacqua.

"Upstairs where?"

"To the lady I told you about, the secretary of my office. She lives on the first floor. We will wait there comfortably until we can get the key to the apartment."

"Where is it?"

"The portiere isn't sure. He says a certain Contessa owns the apartment but she let her lover live in it. Now the Contessa decided to get married so she asked the lover to move, but he took the key with him."

"It's that simple," said Carl.

"The portiere will telephone the Contessa's lawyer who takes care of her affairs. He must have another key. While he makes the call we will wait in Mrs. Gaspari's apartment. She will make you an American coffee. You'll like her husband too, he works for an American company."

"Never mind the coffee," Carl said impatiently. "Isn't there some way we can get a look into the flat? For all I know it may not be worth waiting for. Since it's on the ground floor maybe we can have a look through the windows?"

"The windows are covered by shutters

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which can be raised from the inside only."

They walked up to the secretary's apartment. She was a dark woman of thirty, with extraordinary legs, and bad teeth when she smiled.

"Is the apartment worth seeing?" Carl asked her.

"It's just like mine, with the exception of having a garden. Would you care to see mine?"

"If I may."

"Please."

She led him through her rooms. Bevilacqua remained on the sofa in the living room, his damp briefcase on his knees. He opened the straps, took out a chunk of bread, and chewed thoughtfully.

CARL admitted to himself that he liked the flat. The building was comparatively new, had gone up after the war. The one bedroom was a disadvantage, but the kids could have it, and he and Norma would sleep on the day-bed in the living room. The terrace studio was perfect for a workroom. He had looked out of the bedroom window and seen the garden, a wonderful place for the children to play.

"Is the rent really forty-five thousand?" he asked.

"Exactly."

"And it is furnished?"

"In quite good taste."

"Why doesn't the Contessa ask more for it?"

"She has other things on her mind," Mrs. Gaspari laughed. "Oh, see," she said, "the rain has stopped and the sun is coming out." She was standing close to him.

"What's in it for her?" Carl thought and then remembered she would share Bevilacqua's poor three per cent.

He felt his lips moving. He tried to stop the prayer but it went on. When he had finished, it began again. The apartment was fine, the garden just the thing for the kids. The price was better than he had hoped.

In the living room Bevilacqua was talking to the portiere. "He couldn't reach the lawyer," he said glumly.

"Let me try," Mrs. Gaspari said. The portiere gave her the number and left. She dialed the lawyer but found he had gone for the day. She got his house number and telephoned there. The busy signal came. She waited a minute, then dialed again.

Bevilacqua took two small hard apples from his briefcase and offered one to Carl. Carl shook his head. The Italian peeled the apples with his penknife and ate both. He dropped the skins and cores into his briefcase, then locked the straps.

"Maybe we could take the door down," Carl suggested. "It shouldn't be hard to pull the hinges."

"The hinges are on the inside."

"I doubt if the Contessa would rent to you," said Mrs. Gaspari from the telephone, "if you got in by force."

"If I had the lover here," Bevilacqua said, "I would break his neck for stealing the key."

"Still busy," said Mrs. Gaspari.

"Where does the Contessa live?" Carl asked. "Maybe I could take a taxi over."

"I believe she moved recently," Mrs. Gaspari answered. "I once had her address but I have no longer."

"Would the portiere know it?"

"Possibly." She called the portiere on the house phone but all he would give her was the Contessa's telephone number. The Contessa wasn't home, her maid said, so they telephoned the lawyer and again got a busy signal. Carl was by now irritated.

Mrs. Gaspari called the telephone operator, giving the Contessa's number and requesting her home address. The telephone operator found the old one but could not locate the new.

"Stupid," said Mrs. Gaspari. Once more she dialed the lawyer.

"I have him," she announced over the mouthpiece. "Buon giorno, Avvocato." Her voice was candy.

Carl heard her ask the lawyer if he had a duplicate key and the lawyer replied for three minutes.

She banged down the phone. "He has no key. Apparently there is only one."

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"To hell with all this." Carl got up. "I'm going back to the United States."

It was raining again. A sharp crack of thunder split the sky, and Bevilacqua, abandoning his briefcase, rose in fright.

"I'm licked," Carl said to Norma, the next morning. "Call the agents and tell them we're ready to pay seventy-five. We've got to get out of this joint."

"Not before we speak to the Contessa. I'll tell her my troubles and break her heart."

"You'll get involved and you'll get nowhere," Carl warned her.

"Please call her anyway."

"I haven't got her number. I didn't think of asking for it."

"Find it. You're good at research."

He considered telephoning Mrs. Gaspari for the number but remembered she was at work, and he didn't have that number. Recalling the address of the apartment house, he looked it up in the phone book. Then he telephoned the portiere and asked for the Contessa's address and her phone number.

"I'll call you back," said the portiere, eating as he spoke. "Give me your telephone."

"Why bother? Give me her number and save yourself the trouble."

"I have strict orders from the Contessa never to give her number to strangers. They call up on the phone and annoy her."

"I'm not a stranger. I want to rent her flat."

The portiere cleared his throat. "Where are you staying?"

"Albergo Sora Cecilia."

"I'll call you back in a quarter of an hour."

"Have it your way."

In forty minutes the phone rang and Carl reached for it. "Pronto."

"Signore Schneider?" It was a man's voice —a trifle high.

"Speaking."

"Permit me," the man said, in fluent though accented English. "I am Aldo De Vecchis. It would please me to speak to you in person."

"Are you a real estate agent?"

"Not precisely, but it refers to the apartment of the Contessa. I am the former occupant."

"The man with the key?" Carl asked quickly.

"It is I."

"Where are you now?"

"In the foyer downstairs."

"Come up, please."

"Excuse me, but if you will permit, I would prefer to speak to you here."

"I'll be right down."

"The lover," he said to Norma.

"Oh, God."

He rushed down in the elevator. A thin man in a green suit with cuffless trousers was waiting in the lobby. He was about forty, his face small, his hair wet black, and he wore at a tilt the brownest hat Carl had ever seen. Though his shirt collar was frayed, he looked impeccable. Into the air around him leaked the odor of cologne.

"De Vecchis," he bowed. His eyes, in a slightly pockmarked face, were restless.

"I'm Carl Schneider. How'd you get my number?"

De Vecchis seemed not to have heard. "I hope you are enjoying your visit here."

"I'd enjoy it more if I had a house to live in."

"Precisely. And what is your impression of Italy?"

"I like the people."

"But there are too many of them." De Vecchis looked restlessly around. "Where may we speak? My time is short."

"Ah," said Carl. He pointed to a little room where people wrote letters. "In there."

They entered and sat at a table, alone in the room.

De Vecchis felt in his pocket for something, perhaps a cigarette, but came up with nothing. "I won't waste your time," he said. "You wish the apartment you saw yesterday? I wish you to have it, it is most desirable. There is also with it a garden of roses. You will love it on a summer night when Rome is hot. However, the practical matter is this. Are you willing to invest a few lire to obtain the privilege of entry?"

"The key?" Carl knew but asked.

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"Precisely. To be frank I am not in good straits. To that is added the psychological disadvantage of the aftermath of a love affair with a most difficult woman. I leave you to imagine my present condition. Notwithstanding, the apartment I offer is attractive and the rent, as I understand, is for Americans not too high. Surely this has its value for you?" He attempted a smile but it died in birth.

"I am a graduate student of Italian studies," Carl said, giving him the facts. "I've invested all of my savings in this trip abroad, to get my Ph.D. dissertation done. I have a wife to support and two children."

"I hear that your government is most generous to the Fulbright Fellows?"

"You don't understand. I am not a Fulbright Fellow."

"Whatever it is," De Vecchis said, drumming his fingertips on the table, "the price of the key is eighty thousand lire."

Carl laughed mirthlessly.

"I beg your pardon?"

Carl rose.

"Is the price too high?"

"Everything is too high."

De Vecchis rubbed his brow nervously. "Very well, since not all Americans are rich Americans—you see, I am objective—I will reduce the sum by one half. For less than a month's rent the key is yours."

"Thanks. No dice."

"Please? I don't understand this expression."

"I can't afford it. I'd still have a commission to pay the agent."

"Oh? Then why don't you forget him? I will issue orders to the portiere to allow you to move in immediately. This evening, if you prefer. The Contessa's lawyer will draw up the lease free of charge. And although she is difficult to her lovers, she is an angel to her tenants."

"I'd like to forget the agent," Carl said, "but I can't."

De Vecchis gnawed his lip. "I will make it twenty-five thousand," he said, "but this is my last and absolute word."

"No, thanks. I won't be a party to a bribe."

De Vecchis rose, his small face tight, pale. "It is people like you who drive us into the hands of the Communists. You try to buy us—our votes, our culture, and then you dare speak of bribes."

He strode out of the room and through the lobby.

Five minutes later the phone rang. "Fifteen thousand is my final offer." His voice was thick.

"Not a cent," said Carl.

Norma stared at him.

De Vecchis slammed the phone.

THE portiere telephoned. He had looked everywhere, he said, but had lost the Contessa's address.

"What about her phone number?" Carl asked.

"It was changed when she moved. The numbers are confused in my mind, the old with the new."

"Look here," Carl said, "I'll tell the Contessa you sent De Vecchis to see me about her apartment."

"How can you tell her if you don't know her number?" the portiere asked with curiosity. "It isn't listed in the book."

"I'll ask Mrs. Gaspari for it when she gets home from work, then I'll call the Contessa and tell her what you did."

"What did I do? Tell me exactly."

"You sent her former lover, a man she wants to get rid of, to try to squeeze money out of me for something that is none of his business—namely her apartment."

"Is there no other way than this?" asked the portiere.

"If you tell me her address I will give you one thousand lire." Carl felt his tongue thicken.

"How shameful," Norma said from the sink, where she was washing clothes.

"Not more than one thousand?" asked the portiere.

"Not till I move in."

The portiere then told him the Contessa's last name and her new address. "Don't repeat where you got it."

Carl swore he wouldn't.

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He left the hotel on the run, got into a cab, and drove across the Tiber to the Via Cassia, in the country.

The Contessa's maid admitted him into a fabulous place with mosaic floors, gilded furniture, and a marble bust of the Contessa's great-grandfather in the foyer where Carl waited. In twenty minutes the Contessa appeared, a plain-looking woman, past fifty, with dyed blonde hair, black eyebrows, and a short, tight dress. The skin of her arms was wrinkled, but her bosom was enormous and she smelled like a rose garden.

"Please, you must be quick," she said impatiently. "There is so much to do. I am preparing for my wedding."

"Contessa," said Carl, "excuse me for rushing in like this, but my wife and I have a desperate need for an apartment and we know that yours on the Via Tirreno is vacant. I'm an American student of Italian life and manners. We've been in Italy almost a month and are still living in a third-rate hotel. My wife is unhappy. The children have miserable colds. I'll be glad to pay you fifty thousand lire, instead of the forty-five you ask, if you will kindly let us move in today."

"Listen," said the Contessa, "I come from an honorable family. Don't try to bribe me."

Carl blushed. "I mean nothing more than to give you proof of my good will."

"In any case, my lawyer attends to my real estate matters."

"He hasn't the key."

"Why hasn't he?"

"The former occupant took it with him."

"The fool," she said.

"Do you happen to have a duplicate?"

"I never keep duplicate keys. They all get mixed up and I never know which is which."

"Could we have one made?"

"Ask my lawyer."

"I called this morning but he's out of town. May I make a suggestion, Contessa? Could we have a window or a door forced? I will pay the cost of repair."

The Contessa's eyes glinted. "Of course not," she said huffily. "I will have no destruction of my property. We've had enough of that sort of thing here. You Americans have no idea what we have lived through."

"But doesn't it mean something to you to have a reliable tenant in your apartment? What good is it standing empty? Say the word and I'll bring you the rent in an hour."

"Come back in two weeks, young man, after I finish my honeymoon."

"In two weeks I may be dead," Carl said.

The Contessa laughed.

Outside, he met Bevilacqua. He had a black eye and a stricken expression.

"So you've betrayed me?" the Italian said hoarsely.

"What do you mean 'betrayed'? Who are you, Jesus Christ?"

"I hear you went to De Vecchis and begged for the key, with plans to move in without telling me."

"How could I keep that a secret with your pal Mrs. Gaspari living right over my head? The minute I moved in she'd tell you, then you'd be over on horseback to collect."

"That's right," said Bevilacqua. "I didn't think of it."

"Who gave you the black eye?" Carl asked.

"De Vecchis. He's as strong as a wild pig. I met him at the apartment and asked for the key. He called me dirty names. We had a fight and he hit me in the eye with his elbow. How did you make out with the Contessa?"

"Not well. Did you come to see her?"

"Vaguely."

"Go in and beg her to let me move in, for God's sake. Maybe she'll listen to a countryman."

"Don't ask me to eat a horse," said Bevilacqua.

THAT night Carl dreamed they had moved out of the hotel into the Contessa's apartment. The children were in the garden, playing among the roses. In the morning he decided to go to the portiere and offer him ten thousand lire if he would have a new

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key made, however they did it—door up or door down.

When he arrived at the apartment house the portiere and Bevilacqua were there with a toothless man, on his knees, poking a flattened wire into the door lock. In two minutes it clicked open.

With a gasp they all entered. From room to room they wandered like dead men. The place was a ruin. The furniture had been smashed with a dull axe. The slashed sofa revealed its inner springs. Rugs were cut up, crockery broken, books wildly torn and scattered. The white walls had been splashed with red wine, except one in the living room which was decorated with dirty words in six languages, printed in orange lipstick.

"Mamma mia," muttered the toothless locksmith, crossing himself. The portiere slowly turned yellow. Bevilacqua wept.

De Vecchis, in his pea green suit, appeared in the doorway. "Ecco la chiave!" He held it triumphantly aloft.

"Assassin!" shouted Bevilacqua. "Turd! May your bones grow hair and rot."

"He lives for my death," he cried to Carl, "I for his. This is our condition."

"You lie," said Carl. "I love this country."

De Vecchis flung the key at them and ran. Bevilacqua, the light of hatred in his eyes, ducked, and the key hit Carl on the forehead, leaving a mark he could not rub out.

GENESIS

JAMES DICKEY

When car-lights turn
The inside corner of the room
I wake to come singing up.
I watch a woman burn

Who of myself is made
In the sun, and turned by her heart
Into the sea. Half-buried is she
In water, on legs of shade,

In the world's deep grave
Of dancing. Her look goes bluely out
Through the force of brow
Of the new wave:

Of a sudden, I know God
Himself, when the dewy man lay down,
Could not but flesh His hand
In Adam's side.

I, remembering,
Can catch the movement of woman
Back to the sea, who feel one rib,
Bent in the ring

Of others, touched
Like a tuning-fork, and singing curvèdly.
She springs; the wave bites down on its window;
Her body, new-hatched,

Glides trembling over
The dead. In the heavy, draughting water
She lies alone, in divine, inessential life,
And dreams of a wounded lover.

Each time I think, she is born.
A man beats broken music from his ribs
Where she smiles, now, into the sea, and sleeps
Face-down, upborne.

JAMES DICKEY was born in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1924, and received his bachelor's and master's degree from Vanderbilt University. He has had verse (as well as critical reviews) in the leading literary magazines, and he is currently completing a book of poems. This is his first appearance in COMMENTARY.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

AN INTERVIEW WITH MOSES MENDELSSOHN

The Christian and the Jew

On the 22nd day of June, 1784, less than two years before his death, Moses Mendelssohn granted an interview to an unusual visitor named Litsken. He was a traveling Christian missionary who, by his own admission, came to learn from and listen to the great philosopher, rather than try to convert him.

Mendelssohn, who was most reluctant to discuss matters of faith publicly, was quite willing to elucidate his views about Christians and Christianity in this private conversation. He had apparently no inkling that his visitor would set down and later on publish what was said. Of course, there is no assurance that the published record precisely reflects Mendelssohn's views and words. But the very frankness of the interchange has the ring of authenticity. Moreover, where Mendelssohn discusses Biblical passages he reflects throughout the comments of Rashi, Ibn Ezra, the Radak, the Ramban, and other pillars of Jewish tradition. Of interest also is Mendelssohn's intimate acquaintance with the New Testament and especially his higher criticism of Mark 16:16. Scholars today have generally reached the same conclusion as Mendelssohn did one hundred seventy-five years ago.

The interview probably lasted several hours. The 10,000-word German text was printed in an obscure collection of missionary letters and remained largely unknown thereafter. It appeared in the so-called Callenberg series as Vol. 12 of *Fortgesetzte Nachricht von der zum Heil der Juden errichteten Anstalt, nebst den Auszügen aus den Tagebüchern der reisenden Mitarbeiter,* edited by Justus Israel Beyer (Halle, 1788). The excerpt that follows is in my own translation—W. Gunther Plaut.

Mendelssohn: If we really cared for people we would condemn no one. You claim to be a disciple of Jesus, whom the Scriptures show to have loved everything human and to have taught naught but love and mercy. . . . How can you deny eternal bliss to those who teach differently from you? I think I am the Christian, and you just bear the name Christian.

[The discussion turns to Mark 16:16 which Mendelssohn believes to be an interpolation. The disputed passage says: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."]

Mendelssohn: But let us even assume that the passage is a genuine statement by Jesus. . . . It could, however, never be meant for those who are not Christians, but only for those who are convinced of the truth of Christianity and yet do not act accordingly. . . . How could the heathen, for instance, believe in Jesus if they never heard of him? Your apostle himself says this and admits that it is not possible for all people to believe in Jesus. How then could God ask the impossible of human beings? How could He condemn people for whom there was no way to believe in Jesus? Why does He not send them apostles as in the beginning?

Litsken: There is no dearth of Christian missionaries to the heathen, but unfortunately the preachments find no believers.

Mendelssohn: If you were a heathen you would not believe them either. Just imagine that you lived in pagan ignorance, and there came a Catholic, a Lutheran and a Herrnhuter*—every one a missionary who wanted

*A Moravian brotherhood whose members had fled from persecution and in 1722 had settled in Herrnhut in Saxony (Germany).

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to persuade you to accept Christianity. What would you do? The Catholic teaches one thing of Christ, the Lutheran another, and the Herrnhuter a third. Which of the three parties would you join? I rather think none, and you would remain what you are, namely, a heathen. . . .

[There is a further exchange on missionary activities and then Litsken takes up Psalm 16.]

LITSKEN: If your time permitted I would show you that the whole content of Psalm 16 fits Jesus perfectly. But I came here to learn, not to teach.

MENDELSSOHN: . . . I do not doubt for a moment that the passages which you would quote could be interpreted in such a way as to appear as prophecies which were later fulfilled. Many a sword is put in a sheath which does not really belong to it. . . . You don't extract the true meaning from your passages; rather, you superimpose your meaning. You find that your apostles in their writings apply many Old Testament passages to Jesus. Consequently you conclude that all these passages are prophecies about Jesus. In reality the apostles thought of something altogether different. All they meant to say was this: what happened to Jesus is exactly what happened in this or that verse. . . . If someone whom we have befriended repays us with meanness, we might say that David's words apply to us: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, who did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me" [Psalms 41:10]. But who would be foolhardy enough to claim that David was prophesying about us?

[Psalm 22 is discussed next. Litsken gives it the traditional Christian interpretation, applying it to Jesus.]

MENDELSSOHN: Your convictions are not mine. You are a Christian and you ought to have your convictions. But tell me, how can the beginning of the Psalm refer to Jesus? How can Jesus say: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me, and art far from my help at the words of my cry? O my God, I call by day, but Thou answerest not; and at night, and there is no surcease for me."

It is impossible for this to have been spoken by Jesus, for according to your teaching Jesus *had to suffer*. He knew this and suffered willingly. Now, if I undergo suffering voluntarily, without force and because I want to do so, then how can I complain to others about my predicament? How can I object or even call for help from others? Yet this is precisely what Jesus does, when he wants to be helped by God, his Father. How can Jesus complain that his help is far if he needed no help, since in assuming his role of suffering he knew what it implied? He who complains and calls for help does not suffer gladly . . . can this complaining person who cries for help be Jesus? No, I am convinced it could only be David. . . .

. . . But how could Jesus have been forsaken by God? Do you not teach that this same suffering Jesus was God Himself—how then could he have been forsaken by God? If until he expired he was God, he could not possibly cry "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

You said before that Jews living as they do among Christians could read the New Testament and thus convince themselves of the truth of the Christian faith. Yet, when we meet such inconsistent teachings which utterly contradict our own divinely revealed principles, how can we acquire your convictions by way of reason? You see, as long as these obvious contradictions in your Christian religion remain as stumbling stones, how can you wonder that an honorable Israelite will stand firmly by his Judaism? For if a thinking Jew would find some reasons to accept Christianity, these reasons would dissolve as soon as he learns that Christians multiply the Godhead. The teaching of God's unity is the foundation of our worship and, it would seem to me, of all true worship. A real Jew would rather suffer death than to forsake his faith in the one indivisible God. Christians cannot find any way in which they can make us understand and comprehend their trilogy—and certainly they cannot do it by declaring it a mystery which must be taken on faith and which reason cannot fathom. . . .

. . . The teaching of an unchanging unmultiplied God is the noblest and most precious jewel which Judaism has preserved amidst all trials and tribulations. Should we exchange this jewel for an uncertain, self-

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contradictory dogma of a tri-une God, and give up our heaven-secured faith in the One God? Never! And if God will damn us, He will do so because of our misdeeds, but not because we find your religion unacceptable. . . .

. . . Pressing affairs will not permit me to prolong our conversation. God did not use the Old Testament to reveal a natural, general, universal religion, nor did He use it for the exposition of dogmas and prophecies. Rather, through the Bible, God merely gave the Jewish people a human law by which it should be governed. Biblical law applies to the exercise of religion and is therefore of an external, earth-bound nature. It belongs to the realm of human conduct, not to the spiritual realm of reverence for God. The true religion of the soul is suggested to us by our common sense. It is this natural religion which, as I read it, was preached by Jesus. Not mysteries and idle speculations. No! His teachings were not meant to exercise human reason and memory, they were designed to train the heart and to express themselves in good, noble, virtuous works, in a love of man which is unpretending, active and universal. The morality of your Jesus is the finest and most perfect which I have found anywhere in the books of wisdom and he who would criticize it is not worthy of being called a man. Happy and blessed indeed is he who lives in accordance with this morality, be he Christian or Jew. For methinks that God will some day ask us what good we accomplished in this world, not what we believed.

That is the express teaching of your Jesus, that one should love all men, even one's enemies; that one should feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit* the prisoners. In one word: do good for those who are in need; for God looks only to this, and He will grant man eternal bliss only because of such works. This is true religion and the right way to honor God—not through faith in mysteries, but through works of love. He who follows this religion can rightly say that Jesus is his savior and that he will attain salvation because of Jesus. . . .

I wish that all Christians would make love of man their first obligation. Instead of bothering their heads over systems of faith and method, over prophecies and mysteries, they should strive to cultivate and practice the spirit of goodness and service toward everyone—even toward non-Christians. Would that Christians had always thought in this fashion and had made the love of man their first law! Millions of people would not have lost their lives. No one would have heard of exile and expulsion, of Crusades and Inquisition, of the Thirty Years' War, and of uncounted evils which blind fanaticism and the spirit of persecution have spread across the earth. Nature is horrified over the history of suffering, the tribulations, the unheard-of cruelties. . . .

In many countries matters have not improved up to this very day. Frederick the Great has contributed to the betterment of the world, for with his policy of religious tolerance he has re-introduced the love of man in his state. This philosopher and enlightened Christian grants to all the liberty to reach heaven in their separate ways, if only they consider the love of man their duty and act accordingly. Nothing else is asked of them; and Jesus, if I am right, asked nothing else of his followers. Love man and you please God, whether you are Christian, Jew, or heathen, for the name does not matter. You see: on this I build my religion.

Please forgive me now, we must leave off here, my affairs await me.

*Litsken writes "visit" (*besuchen*). Mendelssohn more likely said "redeem the captives," which, while a long practiced Jewish duty, may not have been familiar to Litsken.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

MORAL FREEDOM IN A DETERMINED WORLD

Responsibility and Sentimentalism

SIDNEY HOOK

IN THE last year of the Weimar Republic, when ordinary criminals were sometimes more philosophical than the judges of Hitler's Third Reich subsequently proved to be, a strange case was tried before the tribunal of Hannover. The evidence showed that one Waldemar Debbler had been guilty of burglary, and the prosecutor proposed two years of penal servitude. Whereupon the prisoner rose and said:

"Gentlemen, you see in me the victim of an unwavering destiny. So-called freedom of decision does not exist. Every human action in this world is determined. The causes are given by the circumstances and the results inevitable. By my inclinations of character, for which I am not responsible, since they were born in me, by my upbringing, my experiences, I was predetermined to become what I am. If you, gentlemen, had a heredity similar to mine and had been subjected to the same influence as I, you would also have committed the burglary in this particular situation. With this theory I am in good company. I refer you to Spinoza and Leibnitz. Even St. Augustine and, later, Calvin attributed all human actions to the immutable decree of destiny. As I have only done what I had to do, you have no moral right to punish me, and I therefore plead for my acquittal."

To which peroration the court answered: "We have followed the prisoner's reasoning with attention. Whatever happens is the necessary and immutable sequel of preceding causes which, once given, could not be other than it is. Consequently the prisoner, by reason of his character and experience, was destined to commit the burglary. On the other hand, destiny also decrees that the court, as a result of the submitted testimony, must judge the prisoner guilty of burglary. The causes—the deed, the law, the nature of the judge—being given, the sentence of guilty and punishment follows as a natural consequence."

When asked whether he accepted the sentence, the prisoner declared: "Destiny demands that I appeal." To which the judge replied: "That may be. However, destiny will see to it that your appeal is rejected."

This story, for whose authenticity with respect to exact detail I will not vouch, confuses the concept of determinism with that of fatalism. It confuses an event whose occurrence depends upon, or is caused by, what the individual in this particular situation desires and does, with an event whose occurrence does not depend upon any event antecedent to it, and which would occur no matter what the antecedent event was. It confuses conditional necessity with unconditional necessity, what is *predetermined* with what is predictable with reference to certain laws and initial data. It further fails to distinguish clearly between the concept of punishment and the concept of moral responsi-

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SIDNEY HOOK requires no introduction. This article represents the slightly amended text of the Horace Kallen lecture, which he recently delivered at the New School for Social Research.

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bility. Nonetheless, in its appeal to a double standard of judgment it illustrates a defect which appears in the writings of more sophisticated philosophers who have returned to the theme of determinism and moral responsibility in recent years.

Those philosophers who have thought that progress in philosophy consists in part in showing that the traditional problems of philosophy are either pseudo-problems, or a confusing mixture of psychology, logic, and sociology, have been rudely awakened from their complacency by a revival of interest in the question of free will, determinism, and responsibility. It had been widely assumed that the whole problem of whether the *will* is free had been replaced, in consequence of the writings of Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Mill, and the modern naturalists and positivists, by the problem of the *conditions* under which men's actions are free. The general solution had been that *men* are free when their actions are determined by their own will, and not by the will of others, or by factors which lead us to say that their actions were involuntary. To the extent that conditions exist which prevent a man from acting as he wishes (e.g., ignorance, physical incapacity, constraint used upon his body and mind) he is unfree. This view accepts the postulate of determinism as valid, regardless of whether a man's action is free or coerced—in one case his action is determined by his own volition, in the other not. The fact that my volition, say, to undergo an operation, is caused by a complex of factors, among which the existence of sickness or disease, or the belief in the existence of sickness or disease, is normally a necessary condition, does not make my action less free. After all, it would be absurd to suggest that my action in undergoing an operation would be free only if there were no cause or reason to undergo it. If one insisted on undergoing an operation when one knew there was no cause for the operation, one would normally be regarded as insane. That there would be a cause for the decision, for the insistence on the unnecessary operation, would not affect our judgment of it. On this view, the distinction between free and unfree acts, sane or insane acts, lies in the specific character of the causes at work, not in the presence or absence of causes.

What has been until recently considered a commonplace is now in several quarters described and repudiated as a wild paradox. That an action can be characterized as both "determined" and "free," or "determined" and "responsible," is denied from two different points of view. The first view accepts determinism, indeed insists on it, because of the findings of modern medicine and psychotherapy, and then argues the invalidity of judgments of responsibility in any and every case. The second accepts the validity of the principle of responsibility, but denies the validity of the postulate of determinism or of its universal applicability.

II

Those who believe that one cannot legitimately square the doctrine of determinism with the acceptance of responsibility argue generally as follows: an individual is neither responsible nor blamable for his actions unless he could have acted differently from the way he did. Given the sum total of conditions which preceded his action, the latter is in principle always predictable or determined, and therefore unavoidable. But if an action is unavoidable, then no one can be held morally responsible for it.

The usual retort to this is to point out that an act is determined, among other things, by a wish or desire or volition for which we shall use the generic term "choice." Consequently it is sometimes true to say that if an individual had chosen differently, he would have acted differently. To which the rejoinder comes that this is merely an evasion. If every event is in principle predictable and therefore determined, then the choice itself, given all the antecedent conditions, is unavoidable. An individual cannot be held morally responsible for his choice if it could not have been other than it was. And even if it were true that his choice now was a consequence of an earlier choice, which *if* it had been different *would* have

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led to different present choice and action, that earlier choice *could not* have been different, given its antecedent conditions, and so on for any other choice in the series. And since the choice could not have been different, we cannot blame the person choosing since he is not morally responsible. He is "a victim of circumstances."

There is a certain ambiguity in the writings of those who, accepting the principle of determinism, criticize the attribution of moral responsibility to individuals or the judgment of blameworthiness on their actions. Sometimes their criticism has an air of high moral concern. They imply that under certain circumstances, which they often spell out in advance, individuals are being improperly considered responsible. They inveigh against the injustice of improperly blaming those who, because their desires and choices are determined, are the victims not the agents of misfortune. This plea is sometimes forensically very effective, as the legal career of Clarence Darrow shows. Defending the accused in the Leopold-Loeb murder case, which is now enjoying a revival in popular concern, he said in his closing address to the jury, after quoting Housman's poem, the soliloquy of a boy about to be hanged, "I do not know what it was that made these boys do this mad act, but I know there is a reason for it. I know they did not beget themselves. I know that any one of an infinite number of causes reaching back to the beginning might be working out in these boys' minds, whom you are asked to hang in malice and in hatred and injustice, because someone in the past has sinned against them."

One does not, of course, look for precision in an *ex parte* plea. To a determinist, what difference does it make whether human beings are begotten by others, whether they reproduce by fission or by spontaneous generation in test tubes? In any case the process is determined. Of course we did not choose to be born. But suppose we did choose to be born: would that make us more responsible? The choice to be born would not be any less determined. And if the argument is that in a determined world, where our choices are bound to be what they are, it is unfair to blame anybody for any action to which that choice leads, how would we be better off, i.e., more responsible, if we chose to be born? And if it is unjust to tax anyone with sinning who is not responsible for his being born, is it any more legitimate to speak of his being sinned against? If children cannot sin against parents, neither can parents sin against children.

Darrow's inconsistencies are less surprising than the fact that some sophisticated philosophers have adopted pretty much the same position.* They fortify it with complex and subtle elaborations of the findings of psychoanalysis as these bear upon the motives and compulsive behavior of men. Yet the logic of their argument makes all the evidence of psychoanalysis irrelevant to the question of blame and responsibility. For if every psychoanalytical theory were discarded as false, the life of mind would still be determined if one accepts the postulate of universal determinism. The piling up of the data which exhibit the specific mechanism of determination adds only a rhetorical force to the position. Further, it is one thing to imply that the concept of moral responsibility is empty, that although in fact no individuals are morally responsible, there are conditions or circumstances under which they could be legitimately held responsible; it is quite another thing to hold that the concept of moral responsibility is completely *vacuous*, that no matter what the specific conditions are under which men choose to act, it would still be inappropriate to hold them morally responsible or blame them. And it is this view, i.e., that moral responsibility is a vacuous or unintelligible expression, which seems to me to be entailed by those who urge Darrow's position, for they never seem able to indicate the rule or conditions for its proper use. If one cannot indicate any possible situation on a deterministic view under

*See *Determinism and Freedom in an Age of Modern Science*, edited by Sidney Hook (N.Y.U. Press, 237 pp., $5.00), *passim*.

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which actions can be blamed, the term "blame" is cognitively meaningless.

Nonetheless, the paradox of the position is that those who hold it blame us for blaming others. Just as the burglar in our story makes an appeal whose sense depends upon there being alternatives, that is upon the possibility of making or not making that specific appeal, so some philosophers find us blameworthy for not acting on the recognition that in a determined world in which no one chooses to be born, no one can be held at fault.

III

I THINK it will be pretty generally admitted that whether a person could or could not have acted differently (or have chosen to act differently), it is a fact that we do blame him for an action which is evil, if it is apparent that he is the cause of it. Whether we *should* blame him for the action is a question which we cannot decide without reflection, i.e., cannot decide until we discover whether what is apparently so, is actually so. "We should think in each case before we should blame" is a maxim universally agreed upon by all writers in this age-old discussion. But if "should blame" is an unintelligible expression, then so is "should think." If anyone interposes and objects that the belief that a person could not have acted (or chosen) differently under the circumstances entails the view that it is impermissible "to blame" or "to hold responsible," then by the same logic the belief that a person could not have thought differently entails the view that it is impermissible to say that "he should" or "he should not have" thought as he did. A philosopher who took that alleged entailment seriously would not only have to abandon the expressions "should have blamed" and "should not have blamed" —and restrict himself to asking whether "we *will*" or "we *will not*" blame—(an entirely different kind of question from the one which provoked the discussion originally)—he would have to forswear the use of "should" and "should not" in every other normative context.

This is not, as we shall see, merely a dialectical or debating point. It cuts the nerve of the argument of those who believe, like Darrow, that their position necessarily makes for greater humanity and kindliness. As a matter of fact, such a position often makes for sentimentality—the refusal to blame or punish where blame and punishment may prevent actions which are undesirable. It often leads to pity for the criminal as a victim, not of a special set of particular circumstances which might have made it harder for him than for others to refrain from committing a crime, but as a victim of any circumstance in general (referred to as heredity and environment or the sway of the law of causality). This is sometimes carried to the point where there is not sufficient pity or compassion left for the criminal's victims, not only for his past victims but his future ones and the victims of others whose action the criminal may inspire. To blame and to punish, of course, are two distinct things logically (except when blame is considered a form of punishment), but psychologically there is a great reluctance to punish if one believes blame is absent. Darrow argued on the abstract *a priori* grounds of universal determinism that all men were blameless, and with his dramatic pleas often won acquittals, not on the specific evidence, but despite it. Yet surely, if needless pain and cruelty are evils, then punishment which prevents or deters actions likely to result in much greater pain and cruelty than it imposes on the guilty, is obviously the lesser evil. Without being a saint, one can forgive the pain a criminal causes to oneself; but not even a saint can claim that this therefore justifies him in forgiving the criminal the pain he causes others.

In passing I should like to comment on some peripheral points, confusion about which seems to have encouraged the view that belief in the incompatibility of determinism and moral responsibility is a mark of enlightenment. The first is that if one holds human beings blameless, one will necessarily treat them more humanely and eliminate capital punishment. But actually the issue

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of capital punishment has nothing to do with the question of determinism and responsibility. The valid argument against capital punishment is that its abolition makes the rectification of occasional injustice possible. But such an argument presupposes precisely what Darrow and those who think like him deny, i.e., that it is blameworthy to punish an innocent man. And as for the humanitarian aspect of the situation, although Darrow won the Leopold-Loeb case with a plea for imprisonment of the criminals rather than their execution, the judge in announcing sentence declared: "Life imprisonment, at the moment, strikes the public imagination less forcibly than would death by hanging; but to the offenders, particularly of the type they are, the prolonged suffering of years of confinement may well be the severest form of retribution and expiation."

It may be argued that nonetheless there is a psychological if not logical connection between the view that determinism strictly entails the absence of moral responsibility and the abandonment of retributive punishment. This can be challenged on many grounds. From Augustine to Calvin and their latter-day followers, the torment of eternal damnation is assigned and approved independently of moral responsibility. It is not related of the oft-cited Puritan who piously observed to his son when they saw a man being led to the gallows: "There but for the grace of God go I," that he opposed retributive punishment. Nor could the determinist of this kind say that he morally *should* repudiate retributive punishment since he cannot help believing it. On the other hand, if it is retributive punishment which is the target of the analysis, there is no necessary logical connection between a belief in moral responsibility and approval of retributive punishment. Certainly those determinists who assign responsibility to actions only when there is reason to believe that blame or punishment will modify future conduct are hardly likely to defend retributive punishment which is directed exclusively to the past.

IV

Although the concept of moral responsibility in a deterministic system is neither empty nor vacuous, it is far from having a clear meaning in ordinary usage and experience. Before discussing it further I wish to comment briefly upon the position of those who accept the validity of the concept of moral responsibility, but believe they must therefore contest the belief in the postulate of determinism. Now it may be granted straightaway that we cannot prove that all events have sufficient causes, such that given these causes the events must occur. This is a postulate which we accept because of its fruitfulness in enabling us to predict and control our experience. Nor is it necessary to assume on the basis of this postulate that we can predict in principle the occurrence or emergence of all qualities of events. What is absolutely novel in experience cannot be derived either deductively or inductively from the qualities of the initial conditions or given data from which, together with general laws, we predict future events. Nonetheless we know enough about human behavior under everyday as well as laboratory conditions to make a reasonable induction the assertion that, given certain antecedent conditions, certain choices will be made (or even more strongly, certain choices are unavoidable). That we cannot always infallibly predict how people will choose is no more a decisive consideration against the belief that with more knowledge we can increase the accuracy of our predictions of human choices, than the fact that we cannot always infallibly predict the behavior of things is a decisive consideration against reliance upon the laws of physics. Now those who hold that the belief in moral responsibility entails an acceptance of indeterminism do not believe that *nothing* in the world is determined. They admit that some events, including some choices, are determined. And of the choices they believe undetermined, they are prepared to grant that certain *necessary* conditions of their occurrence exists. They deny that these undetermined choices follow from any set of *sufficient* conditions.

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The difficulty with this view, as I see it, is that the distinction between determined and allegedly undetermined choices does not always correspond with the attributions we make or refuse to make of moral responsibility. It is sometimes said that in human relations the prediction that an individual will choose a certain course of conduct, if publicly made, has a consequence which may affect his choice. Suppose I predict that you will refuse to give alms to the beggar. You therefore set out to disprove my statement. Knowing this will be your reaction, I make a fresh prediction that you will give alms because I say you won't. Realizing I am now counting on your being shamed into giving alms, you truculently may refuse to do so. And no matter what further prediction I make, that prediction will have an effect which presumably I cannot rely on. Therefore, concludes Maurice Cranston, from whom I borrow the illustration, "that is why I say predictions made to you about you are impossible" (*Freedom*, 1954, p. 167). Karl Popper and D. M. MacKay have argued in a similar vein that "any proffered description of your choice would automatically be self-invalidating." The law of determinism even for macroscopic phenomena breaks down.

I do not believe such predictions are impossible, but let us grant the point for the sake of the argument. Now consider two situations. In the first I make a successful prediction about you but not to you, concerning your behavior or choice at the sight of a beggar in great distress. Here the choice or action is determined. In the second, I make an unsuccessful prediction to you about you, in relation to the beggar. Here your choice is allegedly undetermined. But now would anyone seriously maintain that you were not morally responsible for the action which I successfully predicted, but you were morally responsible for the action which I failed to predict because it was unpredictable? Unless other factors are introduced, it seems to me that you would hold yourself, and be held by others, equally responsible for your action with respect to the beggar in distress, quite independently of the success of the prediction, independently of whether I made the prediction *to* you or *about* you to someone else. The predictability or unpredictability of the choice seems irrelevant to the question of its moral responsibility. And all this aside from the fact that it is highly disputable whether predictions made to you about you are in principle unconfirmable. All of us have seen human beings cleverly and unscrupulously manipulated by individuals who make predictions of their behavior to their face and shrewdly calculate the reactions to the predictions. A man who dares another to jump knowing that the person dared hardly ever resists a dare and that the leap in question is very hazardous, is morally guilty of murder.

The great difficulty with the indeterminist view in most forms is the suggestion it carries that choices and actions, if not determined, are capricious. Caprice and responsibility are more difficult to reconcile than determinism and responsibility, for it seems easier to repudiate a choice or action which does not follow from one's character, or history, or nature, or self, than an act which does follow. Consequently, the more thoughtful indeterminists are those who do not deny the operation of determining forces or tendencies altogether, but insist upon a certain kind of determination which manifests itself in addition to, or over and above, the factors extrinsic to the particular situation in which the choosing individual finds himself. For example, they believe that the free action is not the habitual action, not the coerced action, not the instinctive or impulsive action, but the action which is determined by reflection. And as we shall see, there is a sense in which ordinarily we do characterize an action as responsible, depending upon whether it was intended, and if intended, upon the character and extent of the reflection which preceded it. But so long as "reasons" are not disembodied entities but express reflective choices of men in nature, there is nothing here at which a determinist need boggle. On the contrary, he may define the locus of moral freedom and

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responsibility in the capacity of the human creature, using his insight and foresight, to modify his preferences and control his inclinations whenever they conflict or lead to "actions involving others."

Not only indeterminists who recognize moral responsibility, but some determinists who regard it as an empty concept, write as if a person would be responsible if he could "ultimately and completely shape or choose his own character." Surely the notion of ultimately and completely shaping or choosing one's own character is more difficult to grasp than any it would illumine. Since every decision to shape or choose one's character, to be responsibly attributed to oneself, must be one's own, and therefore is already an indication of the kind of person one is, the notion that one can ultimately and completely shape or choose one's character seems to be unintelligible. C. A. Campbell in a stimulating article distinguishes between a choice which is the expression of a formed character, and therefore determined, and a choice of a self. But aside from the difficulty of separating self from character, it is hard to understand why we should be more willing to accept responsibility or blame for the decision of a raw or pure self that has no history, than to accept responsibility or blame for the choices of our formed characters.

V

We return now to consider some of the difficulties which the determinist faces who attributes blame or responsibility to himself or others. If all actions are in principle predictable or unavoidable, how can he blame the actor? If every judgment of "ought" or "should" implies a "can" or "could," and if of every act we can say (once given its antecedent conditions) that it cannot or could not have been avoided, why blame, why praise, why, indeed, in a determined universe, pass any moral judgment whatsoever, whether it be on a petty sneak-thief or on a Hitler?

I shall try to show that the difficulty lies uniquely in the use of the concept of blame, not of praise, and not of moral judgment *per se*. And the difficulty in the concept of blame is that ordinary usage is itself confusing, that the confusion requires a reconstruction of our use in such a way as to bring out more consistently and systematically the pragmatic character of judgments of blame. I do not believe that if we guide ourselves by ordinary usage we can make ends meet, because in this instance ordinary usage is vague and inconsistent.

First of all, although it may be difficult to square the belief that all choices are determined with judgments of blame and responsibility, I do not see that there is any difficulty in squaring the belief that all choices are determined with the moral judgment that these choices, and the actions to which they lead, are good or bad. Pain is evil, and an intentional action which imposes unnecessary pain, or a desire to impose unnecessary pain, is wicked. After all, we blame persons only for those acts of omission or commission which we condemn. If such actions were not initially or antecedently judged good or bad, we could not blame anybody for failing to do the one, or failing to prevent the other. No matter whether an action is determined or undetermined, accidental or intentional, I can still pronounce it good or bad. We may not blame the child whose actions cause the house to burn, or the maniac who kills those who minister to his wants; but we can and do deplore and condemn these actions as bad. And I believe that this is legitimate from the standpoint of any analysis of the meaning of "good" or "bad" which philosophers have offered, except the Kantian analysis. So, too, although there are difficulties about feelings of "remorse" similar to those about judgments of blame, I can only feel remorse about something I regret, and the qualities of the action I regret are what they are, independently of whether the action is determined or not.

It is sometimes said that if it is unwarranted to pass judgments of blame on actions that are predictable or unavoidable, it is also unwarranted to pass judgments of praise. I am not so sure of this, because of the broader

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semantic range of judgments of praise. When we praise a person for his or her beauty, talent, intelligence, charm, personality, warmth, etc., etc., we do not have in mind at all whether or not the person could help being or doing that which evokes our praise. Formally, we can always praise a person for not committing an act that we would blame, and in this sense the logic of the judgments is symmetrical. But aside from such cases, and some others in which praise seems to be justified because an individual might have acted differently, e.g., in which he fights against odds instead of running away, there is an indefinitely large number of situations in which we unembarrassedly praise, regardless of whether the person can help being as he is or acting as he does. And when judgments of praise do not have this character, they may plausibly be regarded as having the social function of inducing individuals to do what we regard as desirable and to forgo doing the undesirable. But if it is possible to carry out such an analysis without difficulty for judgments of praise, is it possible to do so for judgments of blame and attributions of moral responsibility?

The facts of responsibility must be distinguished from their justification. By facts of responsibility I mean that in every society there are social relations or institutional arrangements which are regarded as binding on human behavior, for violations of which human beings are called to account. When individuals are called to account, this involves the possibility that sanctions may be applied. These facts of responsibility are an anthropological datum—varied and multiform. In some cultures children are held responsible for their parents; in others, parents for children. Leaving aside questions of legal responsibility, or rather legal liability, which are often only matters of social convenience and rules of the road, the justification of responsibility is a moral question. Should a child be held personally responsible for the sins of its father, not only for the Biblical three generations, but even for one? Should a parent ever be held responsible for the misdeeds of his children? Now those who hold that determinism is incompatible with reasoned judgments of blame presumably do not mean to deny the existence of the facts of responsibility. They simply contest the justification of the facts—not the justification of any specific fact of responsibility, but the possibility of any justification whatsoever on the determinist view. If this were true, then, since social life is impossible without recognition of some kind of responsibility in behavior, the whole basis of social life would appear utterly unintelligible, or if justified, only by some extrinsic consideration that had no moral relevance. But, as our illustration shows, there are obviously good reasons why in general we regard it as more justifiable to blame parents up to a point for the misdeeds of their children than to blame children for the misdeeds of their parents. First, we know there is some causal connection between the training or absence of training which parents give their children and the children's behavior outside the home, a causal connection which is not reversible; second, and more important, we blame parents for their children rather than children for their parents, primarily because in this way we can get more desirable conduct on the part of both parents and children. We influence the future by our judgments of blame and, to the extent that they are not merely judgments of spontaneous admiration or excellence, by our judgments of praise as well.

VI

THERE are some obvious difficulties with this interpretation of judgments of blame. For example, as C. A. Campbell observes, we can influence the future behavior of infants and animals by punishment, but we certainly do not blame them when we are reflective. On the other hand, we do not seem to be able to influence the future behavior of the hardened criminal, but we certainly do blame him. Further, how explain remorse, as distinct from regret, for actions committed long ago?

Because the behavior of children and animals is modifiable by appropriate reward and

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deprivation, we punish them, even though we may hesitate to use the term to identify what we do. We do not "blame" them, however, even when we find it necessary to punish, because blame is directed to volitions, or, if we do not believe in volitions, to intentions. If children's actions reveal intentions or if we suspect, as we sometimes do, that animals have intentions, we count upon the sting of our blame to prod them to different behavior. Otherwise there is no point in blaming. But, it is objected, this only tells us whether our blame is effective rather than deserved. The blame is "deserved" if the action we wish to correct is bad, and the worse the action the more deserved—provided the blame has point in the first place. When we distribute blame—as when we say "I blame you more than I do him"—it is because we believe that the intentions (or volitions) of the one had a greater role in the commission of the act, or could have a greater role in preventing similar actions in the future, than the intention of the other. We must be able to answer the question what is the use of blaming any individual, before we can properly distribute blame among individuals. I can see no earthly use of blaming an individual, except directly or indirectly to prevent the undesirable act from being repeated in the future. This is the justification for blame in a determined world.

Another element enters into the picture. The more rational an individual is, the more susceptible he is to understanding and giving reasons, the more blameworthy we hold him—not because the intelligent man's choice is less determined than that of the stupid man's but because the choice, which is determined among other things by insight into reasons, is generally more informed, more persistent, and more decisive in redetermining the stream of events. We blame children more as they approach the age of rationality, not because they come into possession of a soul, not because they become more subject to causal laws, but because the growth of intelligence enhances the subtlety, range, and effectiveness of their choice. And if animals could think or respond to reasons, we would blame them, too, because we could build up within them a sense of blame, shame, and responsibility. A sense of blame, shame, and responsibility has a sound therapeutic use in the moral education of men.

Why, then, do we blame the hardened criminal for his actions, when the continued life of crime makes blame and punishment almost as inefficacious in his case—so it is said—as in the case of an alcoholic, a dope addict, or a kleptomaniac? I believe here that most people in blaming a hardened offender are blaming him for the entire series of his actions and not only for his latest action; what revolts them is the cumulative series of evil things done; and they make the mistake of running these evils together, as if it were one great evil which one great blame or punishment might effectively forestall in the future, if not for the offender in question then for others. If, however, one were to isolate the latest dereliction of the hardened offender, and show that no blame or punishment one can devise is more likely to modify his conduct than blame or punishment can prevent an alcoholic addict from drinking or a kleptomaniac from stealing or a pyromaniac from arson, then I believe blame of the hardened criminal would be pointless. We would tend to regard him as criminally insane, confine him without blaming him.

It is sometimes said that we can legitimately blame only when the person blamed has failed to do his duty or live up to an obligation, and that wherever a person has a duty, wherever we say he "ought" to do something, then he in fact "could have" done so. As I have already indicated, I am not at all sure that our actual usage of terms like "blame," "duty," or "ought" in life and law bears this out. In some contexts "ought" clearly does not entail or even imply "can." "A, the contestant in a quiz, ought to have answered x instead of y to question z" is perfectly intelligible and leaves completely open the question whether he could or could not answer question z, or even see question z. Even in strictly moral situations, when I say, "Since he was on guard duty, he ought

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not to have fallen asleep," I am not sure that I am implying necessarily that this particular soldier could have stayed awake, although I am undoubtedly referring to the general capacities of soldiers. But it is undoubtedly true that the evidence that this particular soldier had not slept for seventy-two hours and was assigned to guard duty by mistake, or that he suffered from sleeping sickness, leads to the judgment that he is not as blameworthy as a sentry who had had normal sleep and enjoyed perfect health. That the actions of both sentries, given the antecedent conditions, were determined or predictable, although in one case it was easier than in the other, seems irrelevant. Yet in one case we say that the sentry could not help falling asleep, and in the second we say he could help it. This produces the appearance of paradox. But if one is challenged to explain the judgment, he would probably say that no matter how hard the first sentry tried, it would not have helped him stay awake, whereas if the second sentry had tried, thoroughly rested and thoroughly healthy as he was, he could have remained awake. The distinction between what one can and what one cannot help doing is perfectly intelligible to a determinist, even though in concrete situations it may be difficult to determine which is which. Normally we do not go beyond that distinction. To the question: could he help trying? we normally reply in the affirmative, and expect the burden of proof to rest upon the person who claims that the second sentry could not help not trying because say (a) either he had been doped or (b) hypnotized. In both cases we are prepared to make allowances or excuses for anything which seems to be an external constraint upon choice or volition. But merely because an action is caused, it is not therefore excused.

Our ordinary common-sense judgments are here rather faltering, because the criteria of what is an external constraint as distinct from an internal constraint, and the distinction between an internal constraint which has originally been set up by an outside agency and one which develops naturally within the system, are vague. The progress of science affects our moral judgment of wrongdoers by uncovering the *specific* factors which tend to make the *wrongdoing* uncontrollable by the volition or decision of the agent involved. If one believes that alcoholism is a disease which operates independently of what one wishes or of how one tries, one will judge differently from the way one will if alcoholism is regarded merely as a bad habit. In law as in common sense, the individual is expected to take responsibility for what is self-determined, for one's character or the kind of person one is, even though no one is completely self-determined. If A develops a fateful passion for B, given A's character, then although there may seem to be a tragic inevitability about the course of the affair, we normally do not expect A to duck responsibility by claiming that he could not help being born, or could not help having the character he has. However, if A, as in Tristan and Isolde, is the victim of a love potion administered by others, we are likely to feel and judge quite differently; for in that case it is not A's choice, but someone else's choice, which coerces his own. The cause was of a compelling kind. I venture to suggest that in all these cases the difference in our response does not depend upon our belief that in one class of situations the individuals are free to choose and in another they are not, but on the belief that, where responsibility and blame are appropriate, the uncompelled choice had some determining influence on the action, and that *our* judgments of responsibility and blame will have some influence upon the future choice of actions of the person judged, as well as on the actions of all other persons contemplating similar measures.

VII

I BELIEVE that considerations of this character are acted upon in many different fields of experience, and that where we excuse human beings from responsibility, it is not because of a belief in determinism generally, but only because specific investigation reveals specific causes which are interpreted

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as of a "compelling" nature. Here is a person who is suffering from a very violent skin eruption accompanied by general malaise. Inquiry reveals that he is allergic to every variety of sea food. Now if he continues to eat sea food, we properly regard him as responsible for his plight. If he continues to bemoan his condition, we are inclined to think of him as a self-indulgent whiner who either does not know what he wants or wants to eat his eels but with impunity. However, if on the basis of independent evidence, we are convinced that he really wants to get rid of his allergy and its effects, then we suspect that perhaps some hidden hunger for iodine or some other element plentiful in sea food compels him despite himself to persist in his food habits. We no longer blame him. His craving for iodine is like the thirst of a diabetic. But if iodine in some other form is available, we expect him to take it. If he refuses, we revise our judgment once again. Given the antecedent conditions, the choice, of course, was unavoidable. But wherever it is possible to alter these conditions by informed action, *that* particular choice can no longer be regarded as unavoidable.

The law, when enlightened, offers perhaps the best illustrations of the relevant distinctions, especially in considering cases of those suspected of insanity. The McNaughton Rules, which until recently guided judges in Anglo-American countries, have been severely criticized for being too narrow in their conception of what constitutes responsibility in adults charged with crime. As far as they go, however, they recognize the distinction between a voluntary and an involuntary act. They exonerate a person of diseased mind from responsibility. Where the death sentence obtains, this means that the person of diseased mind cannot be executed. But these Rules conceive of mental disease primarily as "a defect of reason." A person of diseased mind is one who does not know what he is doing, or who did not know that what he was doing was against the law. Although humane at the time they were formulated, the McNaughton Rules no longer reflect what we know today, or believe we know, about mental disease. According to these Rules, the "Mad Bomber of New York," whose actions showed that he knew very well what he was doing and that what he was doing was against the law, would have to be declared sane although he fervently believed that what he was doing —planting bombs in public places—was an appropriate way of getting even with the Consolidated Edison Company. Anyone found insane under the McNaughton Rules certainly could not have his behavior influenced by blame or punishment, since he does not know what he is doing and whether it is legal or not. Today insanity is considered a disabling emotional disorder; even if the unfortunate person has sufficient wit to know that he is violating the law, he may still be so emotionally disturbed as to be "beyond influence" by any threat of blame or punishment. Because an "emotional disorder" is a vaguer and more comprehensive term than knowledge or a defect of knowledge, it is more difficult to apply, particularly when individuals plead temporary insanity or uncontrollable impulse. But in all cases the rough-and-ready test is whether blame and punishment would tend to influence future behavior in similar situations.

This also explains why in the absence of a case history of emotional disorder we are, or should be, rightly suspicious of pleas that at the time a crime was committed the individual did not have sufficient power to prevent himself from committing it. "Temporarily insane" sounds like insanity made to order. Nonetheless, both in law and morals we do recognize situations in which, as the Scottish phrase goes, a person is guilty but with diminished responsibility. This may range from actions of self-defense to actions provoked by gross infidelity. It may be argued, however, that in many of these situations of "diminished responsibility," in which the subject is unquestionably sane, a severe sentence may have the effect of increasing responsibility.

One of the obvious absurdities of the view

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that judgments of blame and responsibility cannot be squared with an acceptance of thoroughgoing determinism is that it wipes out or ignores the relevance of distinctions between the sane and insane, and undercuts the basis of rational legal and moral judgment with respect to intentional and unintentional actions. It suggests that the difference between the criminal and non-criminal is *merely* a matter of accidental power, that the difference between the sane and insane, the responsible and irresponsible, is only a question of majority and minority. It even goes so far as to call all moral terms into dispute. In the words of Clarence Darrow, "I do not believe that there is any sort of distinction between the moral condition in and out of jail. One is just as good as the other. The people here [in jail] can no more help being here than the people outside can avoid being outside. I do not believe that people are in jail because they deserve to be. They are in jail simply because they cannot avoid it, on account of circumstances which are entirely beyond their control and for which they are in no way responsible." To analyze this seems as cruel as dissecting a butterfly, except that its contradictions and sentimentalities have been incorporated in the attitudes of many social workers. But all we need ask is what sense the word "deserve" has on Darrow's view. If no action can *possibly* merit deserved punishment, on what ground can any punishment be justifiably considered "undeserved"? Once more we ask: if the people in jail can no more help being there than the people outside of jail can help being outside, how can those outside help jailing those on the inside? And, if they can't help it, why condemn them?

The belief that because acts are determined they cannot be morally responsible is a mistaken one. Not only is it a mistaken belief, it is a mischievous one. For far from diminishing the amount of needless suffering and cruelty in the world, it is quite certain to increase it. It justifies the infamous dictum of Smerdyakov in *The Brothers Karamazov:* "All things are permissible," if only one can get away with them. One of the commonest experiences of teachers, if not parents, is to observe young men and women whose belief that they can't help doing what they are doing, or failing to do, is often an excuse for not doing as well as they can do, or at the very least better than they are at present doing. When we have, as we often do, independent evidence that they are capable of doing better, is it so absurd to hold them at least partly responsible for not doing better? Do we not know from our own experience that our belief that we are responsible, or that we will be held responsible, enables us to do things which had previously seemed beyond our power?

I do not think that the theories of psychoanalysis contradict the belief that moral responsibility is a valid concept of psychological experience. If they did it would be only additional evidence of their unempirical character. At any rate some psychoanalysts agree with Franz Alexander, who writes: "The fundamental principle, however, no matter what practical disposition is made [of the criminal delinquent] is that every person must be held responsible for the consequences of his acts." He concludes that this sense of moral responsibility is not only indispensable to society, but to individual growth. "A person reared according to the principle of responsibility will eventually internalize this feeling of responsibility towards others as a responsibility towards himself as well."

I must confess, however, that I find psychoanalytic literature full of inconsistencies on the subject, most of them present in Freud. For example, Freud's answer to the question: "Should a person be held responsible for his dreams, which are the products of unconscious forces over which he has no conscious control?" was, "Who else but the dreamer should be responsible for his dreams?" This seems to me a clear equivocation. The question speaks of *moral* responsibility, Freud replies in terms of causal attribution. Certainly if in a sleepwalking dream an individual did something hurtful

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or mischievous, no reasonable person would hold him morally or legally responsible.

What often passes as irremediable evil in the world, or the inevitable ills and suffering to which the flesh is heir, is a consequence of our failure to act in time. We are responsible, whether we admit it or not, for what it is in our power to do; and most of the time we can't be sure what is in our power to do until we attempt it. If only we are free to try, we don't have to claim also to be free to try to try, or look for an ultimate footing in some prime metaphysical indeterminate to commit ourselves responsibly. Proximate freedom is enough. And although what we are now is determined by what we were, what we will be is still determined also by what we do now. Human effort can within limits re-determine the direction of events even though it cannot determine the conditions which make human effort possible. It is time enough to reconcile oneself to what is unalterable, or to disaster, after we have done our best to overcome them.

THERE are some people—even some philosophers—who, observing the human scene, declare themselves unable to give an intelligible meaning to judgments of human responsibility. They say: "It's all a matter of luck." This is no more sensible than saying, "Nothing is a matter of luck," even if "luck" has an intelligible meaning in a determined world. It is true that we did not choose to be born. But from this it only follows that we should not blame or punish anyone merely for being born, whether he is black or white, male or female. It is also true that we choose, most of us adults who are sound of limb and mind, to keep on living. And if we do, we bear a contributory responsibility for remaining in the world. The Stoics, who so lamentably confused physics and ethics, were right in pointing out that most of us are free to leave "life's smoky chamber." It is not true that everything which happens to us is like "being struck down by a dread disease." The treatment and cure of disease, to use an illustration that can serve as a moral paradigm of the whole human situation, would never have begun unless we believed that some things which were did not have to be; that they could be different; and that *we* could make them different. And what we can make different, we are responsible for.

With respect to judgments of blame and responsibility, the pragmatic theory stresses not the multiplication of such judgments, but only their use as means of individual help and social protection. It eschews the automatic judgment of blame and responsibility, in order to devote itself to the difficult task of discriminating in the light of all the relevant scientific evidence what it is reasonable or unreasonable to expect from a human being in the situation in which he finds himself. It also expresses a certain human ideal of man as a contributing maker or creator of his own destiny, rather than as a passive creature of fate. Sickness, accident, or incapacity aside, we feel lessened as human beings if our actions are always excused or explained away on the ground that, despite appearances, we are really not responsible for them. For whoever treats us this way is treating us like an object or an infant, or like someone out of his mind. Our dignity as rational human beings sometimes leads us to protest when an overzealous friend seeks to extenuate our conduct on the ground that we are not really responsible, that we are either too stupid to know, or too lost in illusion, really to intend to do what we actually have done. There are times when this unfortunately is only too true. But there are also times when we burst out and declare that we really are responsible, that we know what we are doing and are prepared to take the consequences. As bad as the priggishness of the self-righteous is the whine of the self-pitying. To the extent that the priggishness and the whine follow from mistaken beliefs about blame and responsibility, they are both avoidable. In the end, but only in the end, our character is our fate. But until the end, it is a developing pattern on which we work with whatever courage and intelligence we have. To that extent we make our character.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

The "New Theology"

To the Editor of Commentary:

Mr. Judd L. Teller's "Critique of the New Jewish Theology" in the March issue of Commentary, upon closer examination, turns out instead to be a critique of his own secularist position. What are some of the alleged sins of the "new theologians"?

1. They are influenced by Reinhold Niebuhr. . . . This heady wine has gone to their good Jewish heads and perverted their outlook on Judaism. What is the evidence that this has taken place? It turns out that . . . two articles have appeared in the journal *Judaism* (one of which was very critical of Niebuhr). If one swallow does not make a summer, then one article does not mark a trend. . . . But let us grant the truth of the accusation. Many rabbis, led by Will Herberg, are influenced by the writings of Professor Niebuhr. What's wrong with that, one asks? Well, first of all, Niebuhr is a Christian; and in current Jewish polemics this is enough to disqualify anyone. Mr. Teller himself seems rather inconsistent in pursuing his argument. He does not mind quoting one Mullaney to prove one of his points. But actually, Mr. Teller does not sustain his argument against Niebuhr on any matter of substance. . . . Rather Niebuhr "offends the strong emotional commitment" which Mr. Teller still "retains to Jewish religious history." Well, if emotional commitments and offense can be admitted as arguments, then we will have to say that Mr. Teller's self-confessed secularism is as offensive to normative Judaism as any quotation from Niebuhr. There is certainly as much precedent in Jewish history for quoting from non-Jewish sources as there is for a kind of spectre-type Judaism which calls itself secularist.

In an excursus about his *yichus* (the point of which is not too clear), Mr. Teller comes to the surprising conclusion that "traditional Judaism has been in steady evolution toward secularism." How he proves this is a mystery. If he thinks that Dr. Soloveichik or the Tchortkover *rebbe* would prefer his brand of secularism to "theological Judaism," he had better study his sources more carefully.

2. Herberg is "sin-obsessed." Actually, Herberg is not alone in his "obsession." For according to Teller, Hasidism was "sin-conscious" and the Mussar movement was "sin-obsessed" and there are passages in the Talmud "that convey the impression of a sin-preoccupied culture." Not bad company to be in! But what are the manifestations of this "sin-obsession" in Herberg? It is shown in the thoroughgoing critique of liberal humanism which in the view of Herberg and Niebuhr (and by the way in the view of most modern writers on the subject) was overly optimistic about the possibilities of man. That this may be true is not even considered to be a possibility by Teller. Rather he tells us that Judaism did not have much interest in "clinging to the Living God." Judaism was preoccupied with legalism and Halachah. Even a cursory glance at such well-known Jewish books as the Machzor or the Siddur is enough to convince us that the *fact* of human sinfulness was taken seriously. Isn't it the traditional Jew who three times a day confesses before God: "Forgive us, our Father, for we have sinned"?

3. Herberg's view about the destiny of the community of Israel and Zionism is not satisfactory to the tastes of Mr. Teller. Curiously, he accuses him at the same time of promoting diaspora nationalism and also of accommodating too easily to American civilization. How two such contradictory conclusions can be drawn from the same data is a little baffling. Actually what Herberg is saying is what should have been said long ago—and indeed has been said. The Zionist solution of the Jewish problem may be a solution on the level of politics or culture. But even Zionism cannot solve the basic tension inherent in the attempt to realize an absolute ethic within the realities of a national state. No state—even one which is 100 per cent Jewish—can embody within itself all the values which the Bible envisions for the Messianic period. To neglect to realize this fact can lead only to a destructive pseudo-Messianism which can destroy even the partial measure of justice and truth which historical structures embody. We are indebted to the "new" theologians for warning us so forcefully of this terrible peril. . . .

Actually what kind of religious life would Mr. Teller prefer? He would like to see an

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American rabbinate preoccupied with "Halachah, not prophecy"—exhausting its function in dealing with Halachah and ritual—neither of which have any meaning for Mr. Teller who is a self-professed secularist. In other words, the crux of Mr. Teller's problem is that the "new theology" makes him uncomfortable in his secularism. It questions the foundations of his Jewish existence. How much less bothersome would a rabbinate be which was enclosed within the four ells of the Halachah and only occasionally sallied forth to aid in a UJA campaign or to speak at a Zionist mass meeting. . . .

(Rabbi) SEYMOUR SIEGEL
The Jewish Theological Seminary
of America
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Though I disagree with it, Judd L. Teller's "A Critique of the New Jewish Theology" was . . . stimulating. It is strange to find the professed liberal, Teller, impugning the arch-conservative, Herberg, for wanting "to change American society." . . . Teller misinterprets Herberg, I believe, when he compares the idea that there are truths a man "cannot prove except with the sacrifice of his life" with dying at the stake, medieval Christianity, and modern totalitarianism. Sacrifice, in the existential sense, hardly means violent death. Rather, it means dedication to the values and actual life in which one believes, and this seems hard for Teller to understand because he is unwilling to commit himself in such a manner. It is this absence of true belief in any meaningful values which, in my opinion at least, makes Teller's professed humanistic liberalism a sham and his belief in Jewish nationalist secularism absurd. I believe that this is the very reason—the failure of Jewish nationalist secularism to justify itself in terms of honest commitment—why the "new Jewish theology" has attained its present eminence.

The last few issues of COMMENTARY certainly have been the best in many months, among the best in many years. Dwight Macdonald's "By Cozzens Possessed" (January) and Richard Chase's "Max Lerner's America" (March) are wonderful examples of the deeply perceptive, idol-shattering criticism which is so rare these days. . . .

EUGENE MORNELL
Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

With the main burden of Judd L. Teller's argument in "A Critique of the New Jewish Theology" I am in substantial agreement. If anything, I would personally be inclined to go even beyond Mr. Teller in denying that there is anything either *new* or *Jewish* in the views of Will Herberg. The latter's efforts to make Judaism appear to be consistent with Christian existentialism (née Calvinism) . . . are painful in the extreme to all who appreciate the uniqueness of Jewish religious thought.

Mr. Teller has been neither accurate nor fair, however, in asking: "Why has Herberg's new theology gone so largely unchallenged among American rabbis?" No one who follows the views of the American rabbinate can be unaware of the fact that Mr. Herberg's views have been far from unchallenged among them. Led by the Reconstructionists, but by no means limited to them, many of us in the contemporary American Jewish pulpit have consistently complained that Herberg speaks neither for us nor for Judaism.

I wonder if Mr. Teller may not have been constrained to ignore this because he feels apologetic about his "secularism." There is, by the way, something rare even in the secularism of the learned Jew—and this Mr. Teller would certainly appear to be. Perhaps one might contend with some plausibility that a Jewish "secularist" of Mr. Teller's type is one who takes God for granted rather than resorting to argument over Him. My quarrel with Will Herberg is not that he would declare "secularism out of bounds to Jews" but that he has so strangely distorted the emphasis of Judaism on the nature of God and man and on the relationship between them.

(Rabbi) ROLAND B. GITTELSOHN
Boston, Mass.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . [Re] Dr. Teller's words of guidance to American rabbis: it appears as though the "secularist" is concerned that we have a vocation and suggests that it be that of "teaching and judging." Except for the "prophetic" type of rabbi who is busy at the present time with press-agentry, traveling, and reporting about distant places, there are many dedicated rabbis serving the Jewish people. There still are numerous "unsuccessful" rabbis who are teaching and are living *mitzvot* to a Jewish society which prefers to be "confused" with theologies.

(Rabbi) MURRAY GRAUER
White Plains, New York

MR. TELLER *writes:*

If Rabbi Siegel is in search of additional "swallows," I refer him to back issues of the magazine *Judaism*. There is, of course, nothing wrong in quoting Christian theologians, but there is everything wrong in accepting, as Herberg has done, a Christian theologian's *An-*

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schauung. Rabbi Siegel suggests that I challenged Niebuhr's theology. Alas, I have no such presumptions. . . .

Surely, Rabbi Siegel should know the distinction between "sin consciousness" and "sin obsession," and that rejection of the doctrine of man's inherent sinfulness is by no means synonymous with belief in man's infallibility.

The aims of Zionism have been modest—to provide a framework for saner and safer Jewish living than is possible even in the "best" *golah*. Zionism has never presumed to resolve all tensions in history, and has no presumptions beyond history.

I am nonplussed by Rabbi Siegel's cavalier reference to Halachah, since there is no greater challenge to the rabbinate today than the task of accommodating the long Halachic tradition of philosophic and legal thought to the needs of Jewish society in 20th-century Israel.

Had Rabbi Siegel read my piece more carefully, he would have realized that the contradictions he imputes to me are contradictions in Herberg's thought to which I call attention. Nowhere do I suggest, as Rabbi Siegel contends, that Herberg is a Galut nationalist. It is immodest to argue in public with Rabbi Siegel's contention that Halachah and ritual "have no meaning" for me, and with Mr. Mornell's suggestion that I lack the capacity for intense commitment; I hope that my article refutes them. I also commend to Mr. Mornell's attention the secular pioneers of Israel as an example of the intensity of the secular nationalist commitment in its most authentic form. On another point raised by him, I should like to ask whether it is Mr. Mornell's contention that a liberal must favor change per se, irrespective of its direction and purpose?

Rabbi Gittelsohn's firm statement against the new theology is impressive, coming as it does from an authoritative voice in the American pulpit. He is right about the Reconstructionists, and he may be a better judge than I am of the extent of the rabbinic resistance to the new theology.

I can assure Rabbi Grauer that my quarrel is with the "successful" new theology, and my sympathy with the "unsuccessful" rabbi.

The Sephardic Community

To the Editor of Commentary:

As a member of the "generic Jewish Community of America"—Ashkenazi and Sephardi—may I take this opportunity to commend you on the excellent article "The Sephardim of New Lots" by Leonard Plotnik, which appeared in your January number. It seemed to me a most edifying and unbiased presentation. The Sephardic Jews of my acquaintance . . . were gratified at the writer's account of the evolution and integration of the Sephardic community into the over-all pattern of Jewish community life in America.

Jack Frankel

Northeast Area Director
Jewish Welfare Board
New York City

German Anti-Nazis

To the Editor of Commentary:

Mr. Reitlinger's review of Annedore Leber's *Conscience in Revolt* (February) creates the impression that Mrs. Leber in her selection of anti-Nazi resistance fighters permitted herself to be guided by motives not wholly compatible with the noble task she has set for herself. Exclusion of the Communists, says Mr. Reitlinger, creates conformity and, with regard to others, he asks: "Can it be that they were left out because they were Conservatives?"

As an expert on German questions, Mr. Reitlinger should have known that Annedore Leber, whatever the faults of her selection, could not have had questionable motives. Is it asking too much that he should also have known that the volume now published in New York and London represents less than half of Mrs. Leber's selections? It is a translation—and not a complete one—of only the first volume of Mrs. Leber's resistance documentary, a fact unfortunately not mentioned in the English and American editions. In Germany, the second volume was announced as early as 1955, and the prospectus of this second volume, inserted in the first and distributed at the Frankfort Book Fair in 1955, shows full-page photos of Ulrich von Hassell, one of the Conservatives whom Reitlinger describes as missing, and Eugen Bolz, another Conservative. In the second volume there appear, besides Bolz and Hassell, Johannes Popitz, Erwin von Witzleben, Hellmuth Stieff, Wilhelm Canaris, Erich Hoepner and Friedrich Olbricht, all of whom are mentioned by Reitlinger as left out for a purpose. And in the same volume, Harro Schulze-Boysen and the Rote Kapelle are discussed extensively enough to leave no doubt about this group's political philosophy, Communism. "Execution," says Mrs. Leber, "prevented their disillusionment and saved them from the practice of Communism in Germany."

May I also take exception to a certain righteousness in this review. If Mr. Reitlinger terms an actor "a victim of accident" because "he could not bear to part from his Jewish wife," in other words because a man's love was greater than his fears, he betrays a strange

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lack of understanding for the reality of life under Hitler. And if Mr. Reitlinger professes not to be surprised that Bernhard Lichtenberg, this most noble of men, has not been canonized, such criticism of the Vatican seems, to say the least, premature.

HANS WALLENBERG

New York City

MR. REITLINGER *writes:*

Is it asking too much, Mr. Wallenberg demands, that I should have known that the volume I reviewed, which was published in London and New York, represented less than half of Mrs. Leber's selections? I answer, yes, much too much. He himself complains that there is no mention in this volume of another to come. I have read the original German edition, which was published in 1953, and that contains no mention either. Nor does Mr. Wallenberg say whether the second volume, of which he has seen a prospectus dated 1955, was in fact published. I can only conclude that Frau Leber intended her book to be complete at the time she wrote it. I therefore feel justified in describing her first choice of biographies as politically biased. "Questionable motives" is a phrase I never used.

I may have expressed myself ill in using the expression, "victims of accident." I was endeavoring to say that it is not an act of resistance against tyranny to commit suicide sooner than be forced to part from one's wife. The unhappy man who was overtaken by this nemesis, simply for having loved a Jewish woman, was surely a victim of circumstances, or as I put it, "accident." As to Bernhard Lichtenberg, Mr. Wallenberg finds my criticism of the Vatican premature. Of course he may be in a better position than I to say what the Vatican is going to do in the future. I confined my remarks to the present; and, though he has been dead nearly fifteen years, Lichtenberg has not been canonized. I have already said why this causes me no surprise.

May I take this opportunity to correct a misstatement in the printed text of my review? By some oversight Fritz von der Schulenburg is described as having joined the "Gestapo" in 1937, when in fact he joined the Prussian police. There is of course a difference between serving in the Berlin Police Presidium and serving in the Gestapo, which carried a particular taint of its own.

Anthropologists & the Oedipus

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have read with much interest the exchange between Lillian Blumberg McCall and Hans Meyerhoff (April). I am concerned in this note only to draw attention to the fact that not all anthropologists would accept Clyde Kluckhohn's statement that "the essential universality of the Oedipus complex . . . is now established by the anthropological record." On the contrary, and contrary to Freud's claims, I, as an anthropologist, would say that the anthropological record, if it has established anything, has established the fact that the Oedipus complex is neither (1) innate, nor (2) universal, but wherever it occurs (3) culturally determined.

Malinowski in *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (1927) was the first field anthropologist to challenge Freud's claims on the basis of evidence collected in the Trobriand Islands. I inquired into the problem and set out the evidence from both the field of anthropology and psychoanalysis in an article entitled "Nescience, Science, and Psycho-Analysis," *Psychiatry*, vol. 4, 1941, pp. 45-60. This was reprinted in *The British Journal of Medical Psychology*, vol. 17, 1941, pp. 383-404. Ernest Jones was quite familiar with the evidence in this article but chose to ignore it.

Finally, it should be pointed out that there is good reason to believe that in the United States, where the father is far from the patriarchal figure he constitutes elsewhere, the Oedipus complex seems to be very spottily distributed.

ASHLEY MONTAGU

Princeton, New Jersey

[Further correspondence on the exchange between Mrs. McCall and Mr. Meyerhoff will appear in a forthcoming number.]

Political Blueprint

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"How We Beat the Machine" by Robert Lekachman (April) was more than just an interesting article in our house—it was part handbook and part local history. Like the Riverside Democrats, our group, the West Brooklyn Independent Democrats (3rd A.D.), grew out of the 1956 Presidential campaign. Most of our members are new to politics, except for experience gained pushing doorbells for Adlai Stevenson and working for insurgent groups in Manhattan. [This is] our first primary fight. . . .

Mr. Lekachman's article is, I think, a good blueprint for groups like ours, which hope to improve government by winning political races at the grass-roots level. I think he has given us a much clearer picture of the areas where our amateur standing is no detriment, and in what ways we will need professional help.

ROSALYN BARON

Brooklyn, New York

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Philosophy of History

THE DYNAMICS OF WORLD HISTORY. By CHRISTOPHER DAWSON. Edited by JOHN J. MULLOY. Sheed and Ward. 489 pp. $6.00.

MEN AND EVENTS. By H. R. TREVOR-ROPER. Harper. 324 pp. $4.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE LICHTHEIM

OF THE two books under review, the first is a collection of essays by a Catholic scholar who has been accurately described as an immensely learned amateur; the second comes from the busy typewriter of the recently installed Regius Professor of History at Oxford. Other than their mutually shared British background they seem at first sight to have little in common. Mr. Dawson, for all his urbanity, looks back with some nostalgia to the Middle Ages; Mr. Trevor-Roper, for all his Protestant fervor (he rarely misses a chance to lash out at the Jesuits), is very much a modern liberal, with a pronounced secularist distrust of the clergy of all denominations. Why then consider them jointly? The reason is that, each in his own fashion, they are concerned with that troublesome and elusive quarry, the philosophy of history: explicitly in Mr. Dawson's case, by implication in that of Mr. Trevor-Roper. It is this concern which gives point to their polemics and a measure of internal unity to writings covering wide areas of space and time (and in Mr. Dawson's case dating back occasionally as far as the early 20's).

Of the two, Mr. Dawson's essay collection is both the more scholarly and the more interesting. The mind that lies behind it is refractory to a great deal of what constitutes the modern world, but it is a mind that has undergone a rigorous philosophical training and assimilated even those elements of the classical and humanist tradition which are unsympathetic to the Catholic (or as Mr. Dawson calls it, the Christian) point of view. This still leaves out a great deal, e.g. almost the whole of natural science and virtually everything beyond the confines of Western Europe and Mediterranean antiquity. But national insularity at any rate has largely been transcended. By contrast, Oxford's new Regius Professor appears at once narrower and more up-to-date. His point of reference is Britain, not Europe, and his categories are those of the modern historian who has cleared his mind of metaphysical cobwebs. This is a characteristically post-1945 attitude. The present-day British intellectual is indifferent to Europe for the same reason that causes him to be impatient of Continental philosophy: neither is susceptible to tidy solutions. The two-party system operates at the philosophical as well as the political level: in Oxford you are either for or against metaphysics, and Mr. Trevor-Roper is against. Witness his celebrated essay, "Arnold Toynbee's Millennium," which appears as the concluding chapter of this volume. But then Mr. Dawson, though for other reasons, is equally critical of Toynbee, and his criticism, while urbane in form, cuts deeper than Mr. Trevor-Roper's rasping assault. Nor is this the only instance in which the comparison works in his favor. One need only contrast his scholarly critique of Marx with Mr. Trevor-Roper's slapdash observations on the same subject to realize what an advantage it is to have had a proper philosophical upbringing.

All of which is not to say that *Men and Events* can be dismissed lightly. Mr. Trevor-Roper is too good a historian, and too skilled a polemicist, to fail as a writer even when he lets us down as a thinker. He is almost, though not quite, as stimulating as Mr. A. J. P. Taylor, and his mind ranges over a considerable variety of subjects (though on closer examination most of them turn out to concern either the Reformation or the history of England). A good many of these essays first appeared as book reviews, and it is remarkable how much information he is able to compress into a discussion of, for example, the early Jesuit mission to Japan, or the career of Erasmus. He also has the useful gift of raising the blood pressure of his audi-

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ence at all the numerous points where his convictions come into conflict with those of other writers: useful because, though frequently irritating, he is never dull. Here, one feels, is a professor whose students will seldom get a chance to be bored (especially if they are Roman Catholics, Communists, Toynbeeites, or heretics of some other kind).

YET in the end it is all rather unsatisfactory. The intellectual and stylistic energy which made *The Last Days of Hitler* read like a thriller (indeed far more so than most crime stories by professional thrill-manufacturers) powers a machine that is not built to make long-distance flights. Nor is this only due to the essay form. The example of Mr. Dawson's work is there to prove that the essay can be turned to quite different uses:

"Any vital point in the life of society may become the centre of . . . polarization, and where a culture has an exceptionally rigid organization, as in the Byzantine empire, the principle of duality may find expression in an apparently arbitrary division, like those of the Circus factions—the Blues and the Greens—which played so important a part in the social life of Constantinople. As a rule, however, race and religion are the vital points around which the opposing forces in society coalesce. Thus we see how the Ionian and Dorian strains form the two opposite poles of Greek civilization and finally become defined in the conflict between Athens and Sparta which tore Greece asunder in the fifth century B.C."

This passage comes from a paper entitled "Cultural Polarity and Religious Schism," first published by Mr. Dawson in 1942 and now included by his editor in the recently published volume. Irrespective of whether one agrees with it, this kind of generalizing comment has a suggestive quality for which the reader of Mr. Trevor-Roper's writings will seek in vain. It is of course a quality also present in Toynbee's work, which is why Dawson's polite but trenchant criticism of Toynbee's mystifications is so much more satisfying than Trevor-Roper's brilliant display of polemical fireworks. Or take Dawson's comment on Oswald Spengler's notorious doctrine of cultural life-cycles:

". . . Spengler takes the view that the whole of our civilization is essentially the work of one people—the Germans. Consequently, he begins its life-cycle, not with the Barbarian Invasions, as the parallel of the ancient world would suggest, but in the centuries which produced the Crusades, the Nibelungenlied and Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parsifal. This initial error falsifies his whole series of analogies between the ancient and modern cultures. He compares the Athenian democracy to the Bourbons instead of to Renaissance Italy, the age of Alexander to that of Napoleon instead of to the first European expansion in the sixteenth century, and the present age to that of the early Punic wars instead of the Imperial epoch. Hence the depressing character of his forecast, since he would have us spend the next two centuries in that work of material organization which has actually occupied us for the last two hundred years. In reality, since our civilization is the work of several peoples, it embraces several parallel life-cycles. The most representative of these is no doubt that of the French, which stands midway between the early ripening of the Italians and the late maturity of the Germans. Indeed in many respects France has a similar importance for our culture to that which Hellas possessed for the culture of antiquity. Nevertheless this is but an average standard, and it can only be applied with exactitude to the French portion of the Western European culture-area."

AGAIN it does not particularly matter whether one agrees. The significance of such a passage lies in its synoptic quality. It is plain that the writer has thought about history in a manner quite foreign to those academic historians whose refusal to "annex history to a metaphysical system" was recently stressed by Mr. Alan Bullock and would doubtless be underwritten by Oxford's new Regius Professor (for all his insistence on the contribution made by the Protestant Reformation to England's greatness as a nation). It is equally plain that this kind of thinking—ultimately a consequence of Hegel's grandiose but abortive attempt to marry the philosophy of history to the history of philosophy—holds distinct perils which it may be the part of wisdom to avoid, even at the cost of dispensing with anything like a comprehensive theory of history. Dawson's habit of analogizing from biology and psychology is certainly closer to Spengler's method than his criticism of that vastly overrated pseudo-philosopher (essentially a poor relation of Nietzsche) would lead one to suppose. Indeed a good deal of the animus he displays against Spengler and Toynbee is clearly due to an awareness that these

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writers have outlined a methodology not radically different from his own. In the end all three stem from Hegel (whom Marx once irritably denounced as "the last theologian"—but then one has seen the Marxists falling into something like the same trap). Hegel of course supposed that he was tracing the march of Providence through history. Mr. Dawson does not say so in so many words, but the idea clearly holds a certain fascination for him.

That a professed Roman Catholic historian so deeply committed to theological categories should have grouped a number of important essays under the general heading "Toward a Sociology of History," and backed this double commitment by an impressive display of sociological and anthropological learning, is certainly something of a portent—though exactly what it portends (unless it be the conquest by sociology of the British Isles) is not altogether obvious. "He has taken," said a reviewer in the London *Times Literary Supplement*, "the sociological theories of Comte, Le Play and St. Simon, given them an infusion of divine essence from St. Augustine and added a top dressing of Aristotle, Fustel de Coulanges, Burke, and German romantics such as Herder." This sounds like the kind of improbable *tour de force* to which Toynbee has since accustomed us (Dawson began to publish several years earlier) and of which rationalists are understandably skeptical. But it may be no more than a novel manner of synthesizing the various strands which together make up the conservative *Weltbild*. (After all, most of the authors in question adhered to some form of the *philosophia perennis*.) At any rate Dawson is the kind of conservative who supplies radicals and secularists with a worth-while target. It is regrettable that he is not better known outside England, where his standing as a historian of culture is not seriously questioned even by critics unsympathetic to his viewpoint. Familiarity with his work on the part of conservatives with a bent toward a theological interpretation of history might at least have immunized them against the weirder manifestations of the Toynbee cult.

THERE are of course good reasons for Toynbee's overwhelming literary success, compared with the relative obscurity of so many of his learned critics. Not only is he vastly more prolific and readable than they, but his self-confidence is quite unhampered by those scholarly considerations which mere historians or sociologists are bound to observe, on pain of being read out of the professional fraternity. This was the burden of Mr. Trevor-Roper's now famous essay, a polemical masterpiece irrefutable at its own level and on its own terms. Still, why is it that so many modern historians seem unconcerned with the larger issues traditionally debated by their predecessors? Because concern with general laws of development is meta-historical and therefore unscientific? This seems indeed to be the prevalent view in Britain, though not in Continental Europe. The consequences are sometimes curious. Thus, when a French historian, M. Charles Morazé, recently published a broadly conceived survey of world economic history (the first volume in a planned series ambitiously entitled "Destins du Monde"), a reviewer in the London *Economist* remarked that this important work was "as far as could be from the manner and the matter of most contemporary British historiography. . . . Instead of the Oxford concentration upon whatever history can be extracted from monkish chronicles, we have history that ranges the globe geographically and all man's activities thereon. Most modern British history is of little relevance to the problems of the contemporary world. . . ." Most modern British philosophy, it might be added, is in the same sad case. Hence the addiction of the general reading public to Dr. Toynbee's meta-historical speculation, which at least ranges the globe "and all man's activities thereon," even though the emphasis is rather heavily on mental activities. (Economics and technology have no reality for Toynbee, and do not fare much better with Dawson.) For by a curious quirk it is the modern empiricist who has come to rely on "monkish chronicles." In Oxford they know all there is to be known about Laud's administration of Anglican Church revenues under Charles I—even Mr. Christopher Hill (philosophically a Marxist) has recently devoted a massive volume to the subject. Meanwhile it is left to the postwar school of French historians to describe the triumphant expansion of European capitalism since the Renaissance: largely a British achievement in which the British seem to have lost interest.

The more fashionable academic historians in Britain are thus no longer concerned with world history in the sense in which that term was understood by the Victorians (Marx included). What fascinates them is not the rec-

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ord of mankind's achievement, but the history of their own somewhat parochial West European culture. There are of course degrees of parochialism. Dr. Toynbee's interest in non-European cultures is well known, but his theological blinkers shut out the bulk of human history: only the highest manifestations of the higher civilizations (principally religion and philosophy) are fit subjects for his contemplation. Dawson's case is complicated by a genuine, if somewhat amateurish, interest in sociology which leads him to propose such unexceptionable generalities as that we need a scientific discipline which "must recognize at once the determination of natural conditions and the freedom of spiritual forces, and must show how the social process embraces both these factors in a vital union like that of the human organism." Not surprisingly, he thinks highly of Comte who "made the discovery that all social development is the expression of a spiritual consensus." Among the moderns, there is Sombart who investigated "the bourgeois mind" (and the Jewish mind, though Mr. Dawson is too tactful to mention it) and found that it was responsible for capitalism, an institutional arrangement which Mr. Dawson dislikes and even regards as un-Christian. (It is not clear why feudalism was closer to the Christian ideal, but then Mr. Dawson employs the terms "Christian" and "Catholic" as though everyone must agree that they are synonymous —a polemical device which greatly eases his task.) Calvinism, of course, was "bourgeois," hence un-Christian. On this point at any rate Mr. Trevor-Roper scores heavily, though he directs his fire less against the Catholic apologists of medievalism than against some of the sillier Marxists: his demonstration that Calvinism, so far from being the "ideology of the bourgeoisie," was in fact the fighting creed of the impoverished landed gentry, knocks the wind out of a good many popular generalizations. Methodologically of course the argument proves nothing, unless it be that all modern historians have now become sociologists in disguise.

What general conclusions, if any, can be deduced from these learned disputes? Chiefly perhaps the thought that historians, like other people, are prone to read their own preconceptions into the course of events, past and future. In Toynbee's case this truth no longer requires much demonstration. If a writer like Dawson is unlikely to come in for similar critical attention, the reason lies both in his greater modesty and in the predictability of his judgments where the Catholic Church is concerned: *his* brand of historicism at any rate has an unbroken tradition behind it, and consequently holds few surprises. The same, in a sense, is true of Mr. Trevor-Roper, the spokesman of a postwar generation which has reinstated the traditional British emphasis on hard-headed and down-to-earth empiricism. It is, within its limits, a valuable emphasis, especially when coupled with a no-nonsense attitude in politics. The limits are set by an insularity which blinds its devotees to the significance of theoretical thinking properly so called, and to the urgency of effecting that synthesis of history and sociology which the great 19th-century thinkers were the first to visualize.

Symposium on Religion

PATTERNS OF FAITH IN AMERICA TODAY. Edited by F. ERNEST JOHNSON. Harper. 192 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by ROBERT E. FITCH

RELIGION, in Dewey's phrase, is more obviously an affair of having, being, and doing, than it is an affair of knowing. It is possible to get religion, to be religious, and to live religiously, without necessarily knowing a great deal about religion. Conversely it is possible to know religion without having it.

These introductory remarks are not intended in any way to reflect upon the morals of the very able contributors to this symposium on *Patterns of Faith in America Today*. But they are intended to highlight the emphasis of this symposium on the elements of belief and of knowledge rather than on the element of conduct in religion. The editor, F. Ernest Johnson, has put to each of the participants certain questions concerning the conception of God, the nature of authority and freedom, the nature and destiny of man, the teachings on sin and salvation, on history, and on progress. And we are told that in getting together for this discussion two Protestants, a Catholic, a Jew, and a humanist, "the only possible frame of reference is one that embodies a scientific outlook on life and a respect for historical scholarship."

Undoubtedly closest to the being and the doing as taking precedence over the knowing is

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Professor Simon Greenberg's statement of the faith of Judaism. It still comes as a surprise to most Christians to learn that Judaism cares little for systematic theology, and that in dealing with questions of value it refuses to be fitted into "the strait-jacket of the syllogism." The focal concepts are God, Israel, and the Torah, and it is the "passionate love and joy" inspired by the Torah which give us the heart of the matter.

Curiously enough, it is this faith in the primacy of being and doing which, of all the faiths delineated here, is the most unequivocal in its optimism. As for sin—"from time to time man loses his grip, so to speak"; but God is more generous in rewards than he is severe in punishment. Moreover God's world is pointed in the direction of progress: "The accumulation of the good in the world thus proceeds in geometric ratio, while evil grows only arithmetically. God has so ordered the universe that it favors the right and the good."

For a pattern of faith that has a more theological character we may turn to the opening essay by Professor Robert McAfee Brown on "Classical Protestantism." What is being done here is something of considerable significance in the development of modern Protestantism. It is the effort of a Protestant, moving beyond both "liberalism" and "neo-orthodoxy," to reformulate the classical ingredients in his heritage. The opening sentence tells us that Protestantism is the "religion of free grace," and we learn later that its ethics is an "ethics of gratitude." Some liberals may object to Dr. Brown's effort to reinterpret and to rehabilitate predestination and election, and some of the orthodox might think that there could be at least a passing reference to hell-fire and damnation. But it is probable that the company of Protestants for which Dr. Brown speaks so ably is an increasing rather than a decreasing one.

It might be expected that the Roman Catholic position would be developed for us with a maximum emphasis on rational coherence, but there is a surprise in store for the reader at this point. Dr. Charles Donahue, a layman and a professor of English literature, speaks to us as a Catholic personalist, and presents his faith as having an emphasis on the concrete, the historical, the existential, the dynamic. The object of the Catholic commitment is best described, in a patristic phrase, as the *Totus Christus,* the Whole Christ: "the Teacher in Galilee . . . the risen and glorified Lord . . . the Christ who, as Head of the Mystical Body, dwells in the Visible Church as it journeys through time." Nevertheless, Professor Donahue does speak of the "deposit of faith," is distrustful of all radical disjunctions in philosophy, and insists that, in the last analysis, the truths of reason and the truths of faith cannot really be contradictory.

THE briefest essay, and the least impressive, is the one on "Liberal Protestantism" by the late Professor Edwin E. Aubrey. The Christology here is so innocuous that I cannot believe that any decent human being would refuse assent to it. The heart of the "liberal" doctrine, however, appears to be the insistence that theology is of use only as it may lead us back to "fundamental and dynamic human experience." When we ask how we are to test, discriminate, and validate the "fundamental" in human experience, we get an appeal, not to an experimental logic, but to the principle of coherence. And we are invited to work out a simple scheme of coherence between the deliverances of the church, of the Bible, and of science and philosophy. It is a nice question whether this job is done the better by the philosophic idealism of Aubrey or by the classical rationalism of the Roman Catholic.

On the other hand why not accept—with consistency if not with coherence—the unabashed pluralism of the "Naturalistic Humanism" of John Herman Randall, Jr.? For this, too, is another kind of "catholicity." Though with its partiality for the Hindu rather than the Western temper in theology, I begin to wonder if it may not be so insistent in its tolerance as to delete all that is distinctive in the Judeo-Christian heritage. In order to avoid the exclusiveness of saying "Here I stand!" Professor Randall seems to boast that he stands here, there, and everywhere. As a theoretical position this may be admirable, but I am not sure that it is a practical possibility, nor do I see just how it is to be put to the service of an experimental logic which really discriminates values from disvalues.

Yet Randall's essay is one of the most stimulating in the symposium. Former students of his will be delighted to recognize in this writing the same blend of the witty, the provocative, and the profound which distinguishes his lectures in the classroom. We are disarmed by his opening confession that he hardly belongs in the company of theologians, because "I can-

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not myself claim to represent anything—except, I hope, the Truth, which I see in my way, while my colleagues, I gather, see it in God's." Whether he is implicating both Dewey and Niebuhr in an inversion of Kant's categorical imperative to read, "Treat man never as an end merely, but always as a means also," or whether he is discussing the character of religious symbolism, or setting off humanism against humility, or proving that a naturalist appreciates the historic faiths of supernaturalism better than does the supernaturalist himself, Randall is always exciting the intelligence of the reader, always prompting one to a fresh consideration of old issues.

But while the Jewish Theological Seminary of America has done an admirable job in getting together these five men for a friendly symposium, we must still wonder how the several patterns of faith may hope to live together in the larger social scene. For there is a big gap between the naturalist, who takes an almost wanton delight in the pluralism of our culture, and the Roman Catholic, who acknowledges it as a "tragic fact." Somewhere in the middle, I suspect, are the Protestants, who are pluralists in fact and in function, but are never quite prepared to admit it. For the naturalistic rationalist, like Randall, this pluralism is part of the creative potential of our society; for the supernaturalistic rationalist, like Donahue, it is a challenge, in spite of our divisions, to try to achieve civic fraternity in the pursuit of a common temporal good.

Professor Donahue also assures us that, whatever may be the interim ethic of the Roman Catholic Church while it is a minority group, it has no intention as a majority of ever molesting the civil and religious rights of a minority. According to him any fears in this direction are "based in nightmares rather than in a sober sense of practical possibilities." Doubtless one might ask whether the treatment accorded to religious minorities in Colombia may properly be described as a "nightmare"; in any case this nightmare has been not only possible, but practical, and frightfully real. And it is especially disturbing that when the National Council of Churches ventured to protest the situation, the protest itself was received by the Catholic hierarchy as an act of presumption. Nevertheless, Professor Donahue's suggestion for an "ecumenicism of nature," or an "ecumenicism of goodwill," expresses the essential in a strategy of interfaith fraternity; and, beyond that, we must be grateful for the honest, sensitive, and generous spirit which pervades his discourse.

In conclusion, the pluralist must be right in his conviction that any institution whatsoever, whether civil or ecclesiastical, is tempted to arrogance and to tyranny as it approximates the condition of a monopoly of power—and the temptation is all the worse as that institution claims for itself a sanction that is either "scientific" or "divine." We may indeed believe that God has used the Judeo-Christian religion to provide the foundations for a democratic society, and to discipline it from the spiritual pride of a "people's democracy" which exalts the state into a god. We may also believe that God has made use of political democracy to make possible the charitable collaboration of Protestant, Catholic, and Jew, and to discipline each cult from the spiritual pride of the "one true church" which exalts the ecclesia into a god.

The Social Novel

THE IRON HEEL. By JACK LONDON. Macmillan. 303 pp. $3.75.

IT HAPPENED TO DIDYMUS. By UPTON SINCLAIR. Sagamore Press. 151 pp. $2.95.

Reviewed by MAURICE J. GOLDBLOOM

The Soviet Union is issuing a stamp in honor of Longfellow, and such writers as Poe, Whitman, James, Faulkner, and Hemingway have had a worldwide audience. But of all American authors, only Mark Twain has had a readership abroad comparable to that of Jack London and Upton Sinclair. Indeed, few 20th-century writers of any country have reached as many people, or been translated into as many tongues. Yet I do not suppose that many literary critics, if asked to list the leading American novelists, would be apt to include either one. And to some extent the exclusion would be justified; the deficiencies of both London and Sinclair are only too obvious. Very few of the characters of either ever come to life as individuals. Most of London's are thoroughly unbelievable; Sinclair's are like neighbors whom you've never come to know very well. Nor does the secret of their success lie in elegance of style; London's tends to be florid and ornate,

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something like the living-room furniture of his time. Sinclair's is usually simple and direct, but undistinguished and sometimes awkward. Why, then, have they won—and maintained—such widespread popularity?

Partly, the answer lies in the fact that both are good at telling stories. But more important, both write recognizably about their own time, and about those aspects of it which are of most concern to ordinary people wherever they are. Sometimes this makes for ephemerality, when the concerns with which they deal are of a temporary or superficial nature, or when the forms under which they present themselves change to such a degree as to become unrecognizable. But, though the last fifty years have seen great changes, they have not seen the abolition of poverty or oppression anywhere on earth, and in most places the forms which these take are not too different from those of a half century ago. In the United States, the change has probably been greatest. Hence Max Lerner, in his introduction to this new edition of *The Iron Heel,* credits London with "a nightmare prevision" of fascism, when most of the horrors described had already been prefigured in the United States. (The "Frisco Reds," for instance, are simply the Molly Maguires.) The rest had quite adequate models in such countries as France and Czarist Russia. Where London did differ from most of his contemporaries was in his pessimism; in what was perhaps the most optimistic era in the history of mankind, this was indeed a distinction. Certainly no "Marxist" would ever have predicted that the "oligarchy" would be able to hold power for centuries! (Here, London appears to owe a considerable debt to H. G. Wells, who had already suggested the possibility that the class divisions of society might be intensified until they became a difference of species, instead of being eliminated by a socialist revolution. London does, in fact, cite Wells.) But withal, London was a thorough romantic. In *The Iron Heel* everything results from the conscious will of heroes or villains; at least for the leaders on the two sides, doubts and complexities do not appear to exist. Perhaps this also is part of the appeal of the book; it is much easier to attribute one's misery to the planned villainy of the powers that be than to recognize that they also are usually bewildered victims of forces they don't understand. Because the United States has changed so drastically, the picture of society in *The Iron Heel* no longer has the meaning for us that it had for London's contemporaries; we no longer see in it a description of our own possible fate, but only something that can and does happen elsewhere. But in other countries, where reality is such that the American past is much more comprehensible than the American present, *The Iron Heel* not only has meaning to people in terms of their own societies; it also seems to them a quite plausible picture of the United States.

Jack London has been dead for four decades, but Upton Sinclair is still with us, and celebrating his eightieth birthday. Where London was a romantic, excerpting and magnifying the catastrophic potential of society, Sinclair has always been essentially in the naturalistic tradition—albeit the naturalism is apt to be that of *Everyman* and *Pilgrim's Progress.* By and large, the things that happened in his novels were things which one could find in the world as it was. And as the world changed, so did the novels of Sinclair. *The Jungle* was a pretty accurate picture of certain aspects of American civilization a half century ago. *Boston* —probably the best of his novels—is not only a gripping account of the Sacco-Vanzetti case, but a rather well-rounded picture of the society which produced that case.

It Happened to Didymus is not another *Jungle* or *Boston.* But it is a very pleasant little spoof on Los Angeles and American publicity methods, and perhaps—I am not quite sure—an allegory on the capacity of men for manipulating things and their incapacity for handling themselves. The hero, a young Los Angeles gardener, suddenly receives a mission to reform the world, and the power of working miracles, from supernatural powers of whose identity he's never sure. But the miracles are limited to relatively simple things, such as levitation, creating money (certified genuine by the Treasury!) out of thin air, and healing the lame, the halt, and the blind. When Didymus tries to use his miraculous powers in order to change Russian foreign policy, however, he doesn't get to first base; even a miracle must be within the limits of probability. Moreover, while Didymus is able to win followers by means of his miracles, he and his supernatural sponsors soon find that this is only the beginning of the job. And for the rest of it, neither he nor they are prepared. Which seems to be Sinclair's way of saying that none of us are, in which I'm afraid he is right.

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TV Drama

PATTERNS. By ROD SERLING. Simon and Schuster. 246 pp. $3.95.

Reviewed by RAYMOND ROSENTHAL

COLLECTIONS of television plays such as Rod Serling's are published with a utilitarian object in view, somewhat in that same gruesome spirit which turns out books telling us how to make a million or become fabulously healthy and happy. So, besides the plays, one gets Serling's second thoughts on them, and, in a lengthy preface, his final ones on the "medium" to the "top" of which he has recently skyrocketed. Since the plays are reasonably clear about what they have to say, at least to the viewers' emotions, while the explanations of them are marvels of murkiness and outright contradiction, at first one assumes that the intricacies of his profession are beyond Serling's expository powers. One soon realizes, however, that the source of incoherence is to be traced not to his inability to convey the processes of his creative thought, but rather to the double nature of his inspiration, which has its matrix in the old-fashioned (as of the day before yesterday) liberal ideology—at least that pale image of it one used to see in Warner Brothers' movies and the "protest" novel—and its efflorescence in the practical conservatism of our present social climate.

Split-men on the Rod Serling model must abound today in the popular arts. The artistic impetus given the mass culture trades in the 30's by the seminal work of such writers as Dos Passos, Steinbeck, and Odets, who, because of the availability of their "message," lent themselves so well to popularization, has by now chugged to an almost complete standstill. And, especially in television, with its omnivorous demand for new material, its pathetic desire to please everybody in an impossibly large and heterogeneous audience, and its effort to keep step with the American's changing image of himself, yesterday's socially conscious literature with a liberal slant no longer provides a workable formula, and for writers like Serling it has come to represent an ideal which they must inevitably fall off from, betray by their practice. Indeed, Serling's plays show so neat a fracture between avowed intention, as expressed in his explanatory notes, and actual achievement, as shown by his finished products, that they seem to epitomize the cultural moment in all its bold uncertainty.

In the preface we are treated to a frontal view of the "liberal" Rod Serling, unfazed and uncontaminated by success, alert to the awful responsibilities of his trade, and indignant with the compromises which television's peculiar mores and political pussyfooting force upon its script writers. His vehemence is tempered, however, by a sort of boyish frankness about the hard facts of the business of entertaining so vast and awesomely distant an audience. With an engaging candor that most likely is more a professional tic than a genuine impulse, Serling lists among the perquisites of his newly acquired fame a white 1957 Cadillac convertible and a chance to say no when the agencies demand a rewrite. Yet, despite his honesty, it seems to me that Serling has misunderstood what has been happening to him. He describes at length his tussles with sponsors and agencies to save various scripts that dealt with "hot" subjects, but he quite overlooks the simple fact that his supposed opponents, since they never rejected the scripts out of hand but always worked with him on revisions, were obviously as anxious to salvage them as he was —they *know* that nothing is more boring than pure entertainment.

The truth is that the delicate task of these experts on public response has always been to slip a few real bullets in among the blanks, meanwhile making sure that nobody in the audience gets plugged; and, of course, nobody ever does. In plays like Serling's social issues perform precisely the same function as sex in a bedroom farce; the audience's emotions are aroused by a flickering image, continually brought close and then snatched away—aroused, teased, tortured, and finally discharged into the ground; and the whole trick lies in keeping the aroused emotions pulsing harmlessly inside the prescribed circuits. If they erupt and burst out, what one has is not a work of art, far from it, but merely a piece of entertainment which has inexpertly gauged and exploited the audience's exploitable emotions and, therefore, failed of its purpose. Naturally, this constant teasing titillation is exhausting, enervating, at the end, emotional drudgery—Plato saw its moral dangers to society a long time ago—but that's the price one must pay for unremitting entertainment.

Illicit feelings can be worked up in the suavest of settings; indeed, the more highly polished, respectable, and discreet the décor, the

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bigger the emotional bang the audience will enjoy when the fireworks go off. Serling's drama of big business rivalry, *Patterns*, is a perfect instance of a fusillade of well-calculated blanks, all arranged in order to smuggle in one real explosion. The glossy exterior of a high-powered corporation's Madison Avenue offices is skillfully depicted—swaggering secretaries, staccato inter-office memos, the swift criss-cross of corridor rumor. A new executive, young, handsome, athletic, a real charmer and great organizational brain, has just been hired, and the on-the-skids older executive whose place he is destined to take immediately starts falling to pieces before our eyes. He is sick, tired, fumblingly uncertain. We see him feeding on pills, parading his faults, pitying himself, propping up his failing efficiency with furtive trips to the bottle. Fascinated, anguished, repelled, we are forced by all this to experience two exquisitely contradictory emotions—almost unbearable pain at the older man's miserable state and, as a direct consequence of this, grating impatience at the long time he is taking to be defeated. For, of course, his defeat is inevitable; the playwright has taken care to offer us no serious alternative. And meanwhile, as the agony drags itself out, each of the other characters in the play behaves not as a participant in a real action but simply as a mouthpiece for our mounting anxiety. Even the young executive's qualms at ousting the older man are purely gratuitous in both the dramatic and the most ordinary sense—the playwright has been especially careful to assure us all along that they will never lead to any concrete action —and therefore they perfectly reflect our own feelings of queasy ambivalence. And when, at last, after the showdown with the big boss, the beaten older executive stumbles out into the corridor and dies of a heart attack, the sensation of relief we feel is instant, enormous, gratifying.

It is at this point that Rod Serling reveals his true talents as a popular entertainer. With an instinct for the "gimmick" that will restore us to some semblance of civility and peace and at the same time prolong the revel of sadistic emotions, he pushes the young executive into the big boss's office and has him blow off steam in a furious but inconsequential outburst of indignant accusation. Dramatically, or, more precisely, lyrically speaking, what is being played out in this scene is our own final uprush of guilt and pleasure over the older man's defeat and death. And, logically enough, the young executive is just the right person to give these feelings oblique, rhapsodic expression. Of course, he doesn't quit after his outburst—if he did, we would be justified in feeling that the older man's sacrifice was uselessly cruel—and the play ends on a note of somber accomplishment.

The play I have described was, alas, a great hit and catapulted its author overnight into the upper brackets of the television drama industry. Yet my description is far from what Serling imagines his play to have been. In his notes he tells us that his play "is the story of ambition and the price tag that hangs on success," which, if it has any meaning at all, must at least mean that the young executive was compelled to pay—and I quote again—for his "journey upward against competition." Unfortunately for this interpretation, the only person whom we have seen pay for anything is the older man who has died. As for the young executive, not only does he gain directly from his death, but he has also been granted the luxury of a highly moral reaction to it, which in turn is not paid for. In fact, Serling's vestigial liberal conscience is rather troubled by this last glaring deviation from the old-time formula. "In the end of the play," he admits, "we are never given a really definitive explanation of what he (the young executive) feels the moment he walks away from his moment of truth. Or even if it is a moment of truth. He walks into Walter Ramsey's office (the big boss) after Sloane's heart attack to read a riot act in the name of simple, basic, decent justice. And when he walks out he has decided to stay and fight, supposedly on his own terms. There is clarity here in his actions, but not in his motives. Whether it stems from belief or rationalization I have not made clear. Actually, in my own mind I must excuse this lack of a clear-cut direction, because I feel that Fred Staples (the young executive) is himself unsure as to his reasons for staying. When he walks out of Walter Ramsey's office his battered conscience has not been assuaged; but the tense and taut emotions of the past few hours, along with his fatigue, have taken away some of his own awareness. He is not certain at this given moment whether he has won or Ramsey has conned him into *thinking* he's won!"

"Stay and fight" indeed! Confronted by the sheer moral meaninglessness and emotional

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enormity of Serling's play, and especially of his afterthoughts on it, one even finds oneself thinking regretfully of all those plays, novels, and movies produced in the 30's, suddenly called up by Serling's cliché. Melodramatic, preachy, untrue to the way things are in the world, they at least had recognizable protagonists contending on the basis of a recognizable, though lop-sided, moral code. Now, in television drama, this has been frequently replaced by what might be called the mystique of the all-seeing camera—Serling himself discusses his play, not as the product of his own thought and imagination, but as if it were some ineluctable series of events in real life that he has been lucky enough to catch in the act and put down on paper—a mystique which seems to be founded on the notion that, since the camera eye captures "reality" in so vivid and lifelike a manner, the playwright can afford to ignore all the moral and social questions that meanwhile have been raised. Thus the new technique, as exemplified by Serling's play, is based not on dramatic but musical thought, where the characters are not people acting in a purposive manner but simply the embodiment of repetitious emotional motifs, and where what really sets them in motion is not a logical plot but rather the hidden tension, rooted in adroitly exploited psychological counters, which gives the "music" its color, tone, and pace and which, so it seems, remains a secret even to its own manipulator—a kind of ungraspable yet all-pervading trade secret that Madison Avenue has not yet managed to formulate for its clients.

In Serling's play *The Rack,* which describes the court-martial of an army captain who, under Communist pressure, turned coat and betrayed his fellow prisoners in a Korean POW camp, one can see this musical dramatic method operating with smooth and innocuous efficiency. Instinctively, Serling knows that, although his theme and treatment have been fixed for him by the headlines, he is now handling real social dynamite. He avoids any unprepared explosions by sticking slavishly to the legal approach to the whole matter: Does the Army have the right to try men who have cracked up under extraordinary circumstances, circumstances for which there was nothing in their previous civilian life in America to prepare them? After three acts of tiptoeing blusteringly around the true subject—which, since this is a play, should have been why *this* particular captain happened to crack up—and of presenting only the most factitious conflicts, the answer he gives us is a flat yes-and-no, designed to satisfy both the audience, sympathetic to the soldiers who have succumbed to Communist terror, and the army, trying to deal with an unusual and thorny situation. But the important questions that come to one's mind—Why do certain men break down while others manage to resist? and, as a corollary to this, What are the untrustworthy soft spots in the American character?—have all been painstakingly skirted.

True, to ask for such an examination of Serling, who, with his eagerness to stand on all sides of all fences at once, his ambition geared so completely to what the public thinks of him, his invincible palsywalsyness—there is no other word for it—seems to sum up all that is most vulnerable in the other-directed American character, is tantamount to asking a teenage delinquent to lecture us on the shortcomings of the family. In consequence, his traitor is so vague and generalized a figure that the

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whole nature of dramatic expression, which draws its life from the concrete detail concretely expressed, is subverted and lost in the swiftly moving camera eye—that eye which lets us see everything but what we fear to see.

Intermarriage

ONE MARRIAGE TWO FAITHS: GUIDANCE ON INTERFAITH MARRIAGE. By JAMES H. S. BOSSARD and ELEANOR STOKER BOLL. Ronald. 180 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by HERSHEL SHANKS

THERE are few subjects which hold such fascination for American Jews—especially young American Jews—as intermarriage. The reason, no doubt, is that intermarriage epitomizes the problems of the Jew in a Gentile world. It is surprising, therefore, that sociologists and psychologists have been able to contribute so little to an understanding of the factors which make for a high or low intermarriage rate, and of the mechanisms through which an intermarried couple adjust or fail to adjust.

Viewed against the perceptive contributions social scientists have made to our understanding of anti-Semitism, their failure in the area of intermarriage is probably attributable, not to lack of professional tools or imagination, but to lack of opportunity to observe the phenomenon intensively. Finding a couple who are willing to divulge the intimate details of their marriage as it developed over the years can be quite a practical obstacle to research. It was therefore with high expectations that I read in the preface to this little book on interreligious marriage that, as marriage counselors, the authors had "been gathering case histories [on intermarriage] for a quarter of a century or more," and that this book was "squarely based on his first-hand material."

Unfortunately, with all this precious material, authors Bossard and Boll, both of whom teach sociology at the University of Pennsylvania, have failed to make a contribution. They have failed because they have used their material only descriptively. The result is a mere catalogue of illustrative problems that have come under the authors' scrutiny. No theoretical structure gives their data a meaning beyond the illustrations themselves. To put the matter more positively, the authors have neglected to ask the vital questions: Was there a difference in the sociological or psychological function of religion in the pre-marital lives of those parties who made a success of intermarriage, as opposed to those who did not? To what extent, if at all, can this function be altered in order to fit the requirements of an intermarriage? Under what types of stress does the need for religion to fulfill a former function reappear? What are the psychological and sociological mechanisms of successful adjustment in an intermarriage? Does religion usually play the same role in the lives of both partners to a successful intermarriage? Does this role remain constant throughout the marriage? If not, is there a pattern to the change?

For lack of some such conceptual framework as is suggested by these questions, the descriptive illustrations given here are not meaningful. The only guidance this book can offer to young people contemplating marriage are the "gossipy" stories they have probably already heard from Mother or Father.

For example, there is the case of the Jewish man and Catholic woman married apparently happily for twenty-six years, when several independent accidents hospitalized the wife and daughter and killed the wife's brother. After all these years, the wife's suppressed guilt feelings came to the surface and she blamed all her misfortunes on her intermarriage. The authors do not tell us what happened next; Mother would at least have given us the details of the divorce. Or take the case of the "heartbreaking" remark of the immigrant Jewish father who watched his daughter get married in a simple Quaker meetinghouse with its lack of ceremony: "A common-law wife. No marriage. Just a declaration of intent. . . . He turned to [his wife]. 'Better,' he whispered, 'that we should have stayed in the old country.' " Or the complaint of the young Italian wife: "He says I'll never stop being a Wop. . . . He complains about my cooking. And I try so hard. He says I never cook anything but that damned spaghetti. I do cook spaghetti because I love it." And after the baby is born: "The baby is as much his son as hers. Must he keep his hands off the religious, educational, and cultural training of his own son." These examples are sufficient, I think, to indicate the intellectual pitch of the book.

I am aware that this book is subtitled "Guidance on Interfaith Marriage," and it does not purport to be a scholarly monograph. But precisely because the authors' primary purpose

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is to guide young people who are considering, or have entered, an intermarriage, they are not excused from doing the kind of scholarly prethinking that would make their advice valuable. Even without using the language of the professional sociologist, they might have done their job better by asking young people to consider questions like these: Does the role played by religion in my life and in my fiancée's life indicate that we have a good chance of adjusting to an intermarriage? Or again, what part should religion play in our married lives so as to lessen the possibility of tension? Without such inquiries, sociology and psychology must revert to specialized forms of journalism.

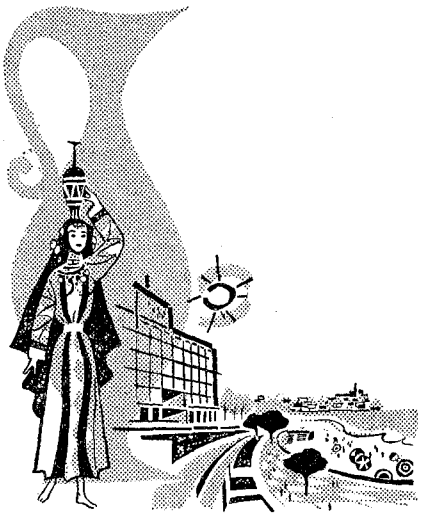
From Cheese to Disaster

ANY NUMBER CAN PLAY. By CLIFTON FADIMAN. World. 404 pp. $5.00.

Reviewed by ISA KAPP

IN HIS recent book of essays, which ranges genially over many subjects from cheeses to social disaster, Clifton Fadiman once more uses the elastic, optimistic, civilized voice that has often disarmed our college-bred Americans. For those of us who get nearly as much excitement from the verbal as from the physical universe, he enacts an agile ceremony, fusing something old, 17th-century playfulness, with something new, TV zip. He keeps us in touch with great writing, offering bracing whiffs of Pepys's and Samuel Johnson's London, and even an informal tour of Dostoevsky's underground, in the course of which he points out what will be strange and what familiar to Western eyes. Making allowances for our discontent, he ruefully observes the "modern stunned look" that comes of overstimulation, jumps to the defense of intellectuals and eccentrics, speaks up bravely "in praise of quotation"—yet he is destined to have no enemies.

It is more than a lucky knack, it is a real sense of vocation, this constant winning and conveying of friendly sympathy. Of his radio program, "Conversation," Fadiman says: "We sit around a table for a short time, talking as well as we can on some non-controversial, nontimely topic." We imagine him benignly steering his guests away from argument, heated comment, even excessive erudition, in order to make their talk more graceful. Like many urbane persons, he is convinced that a healthy



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natural impulse needs to be consciously perfected into an art. He regards communication more as a question of mellow atmosphere than of actual content. In intellectual life, as on his program, the adversary he fights is bad temper, the philosophy he serves, to admit no impediment to the marriage of clashing minds.

There is an amusing chapter about children in *Any Number Can Play*, in which Fadiman reminds us that it is foolish and purposeless to talk down to youngsters, who only respond with bewildered pity to this compulsion. But when it comes to adults, he cannot drop his condescending airs, and in the cause of making all things acceptable to all men, patronizes not only his readers but himself. "An intellectual," he explains apologetically, "is simply a man in whom is writ large what makes you and me specifically human." For the benefit of anyone suffering from highbrowphobia, he tries this gentle metaphor: "There are fewer cassowaries than there are sparrows, but both are equally part of nature, though the cassowary seems a little queer because we don't see him much."

For a writer who uses language with tremendous facility, it is surprising how often Mr. Fadiman hits an embarrassed and embarrassing note. If one has ever been involved in a private conversation on a bus and suddenly become aware that a third person might be listening, one can easily understand the source of Fadiman's archness. Although he takes many opportunities in this book to complain of the incursions that mass entertainment has made upon the individual spirit, a reader feels that the third listener to his conversation is precisely some colleague of his from the "communications" industry. It is these cronies who silently watch him, and to whom he must prove that he has a foot in both worlds, that he is really no snob. What else could account for expressions like "idea man," for saying of Shakespeare that "Like any other pro he had to learn the tricks of an exacting trade"; and of Dr. Johnson, "He is the greatest public relations man the city [London] ever had." Mr. Fadiman is of course always pleasantly bookish, and often shows excellent taste, but far from being a defender of the arts against the power and values of mass culture, it seems to me that he represents exactly what that culture has come to today: he is the man of letters awed by the appeal of TV and radio, the man of learning pandering to ignorance, the public man paying obeisance to privacy, and the man of material focus throwing bouquets to the spirit.

Now that intellect is in more demand and in better repute, we are fated to have every variety of its endeavors. Out of these riches, we had better find out how to reject softness and facility, and to hold out for the tougher, spinier intellectual virtues. In a chapter entitled "Life's Minor Pleasures," Mr. Fadiman, who is always cutting bread and biting off cake, describes the pleasure of making a ball out of rubber bands for his son. To indicate the reminiscent nature of this experience, he refers in passing to the famous "madeleine" at the beginning of Proust's *Swann's Way*. Now, this is fun, sharing with Fadiman a triple-deckered satisfaction: the ball, the resurrected past, and the familiarity with Proust's novel. But for the most part, those of us who do not make transitions as easily as he does must settle for a more exclusive choice: minor pleasures or major efforts.

The two best chapters of the book are devoted to wines and cheese. Mr. Fadiman guides us masterfully among Chablis, Niersteiner Rebach '43 (a drink of "delicate uncertainties"), and Piesporter Goldtropfen Schloss Marienlay '47. He is closest to poetry when he gets to cheeses, and no reader can fail to work up some passion for Edam's crimson balls, the lachrymose moisture around the eyes of Gruyère "which announces its readiness to be yours," or the beautiful, soft, odorous Liederkrantz. But even here, sophistication soon loses its charm, and after all this bounty, we long for black coffee and a slice of plain white farmer cheese.

Book Reviewers in This Issue

George Lichtheim is an associate editor of Commentary.

Robert E. Fitch is Dean of the Pacific School of Religion.

Maurice J. Goldbloom is the author of *American Security and Freedom* (1954).

Raymond Rosenthal, recently returned from Italy, is a free-lance writer and translator.

Hershel Shanks, a sociologist turned lawyer, practises in Washington, D. C.

Isa Kapp's reviews have appeared in various literary journals.

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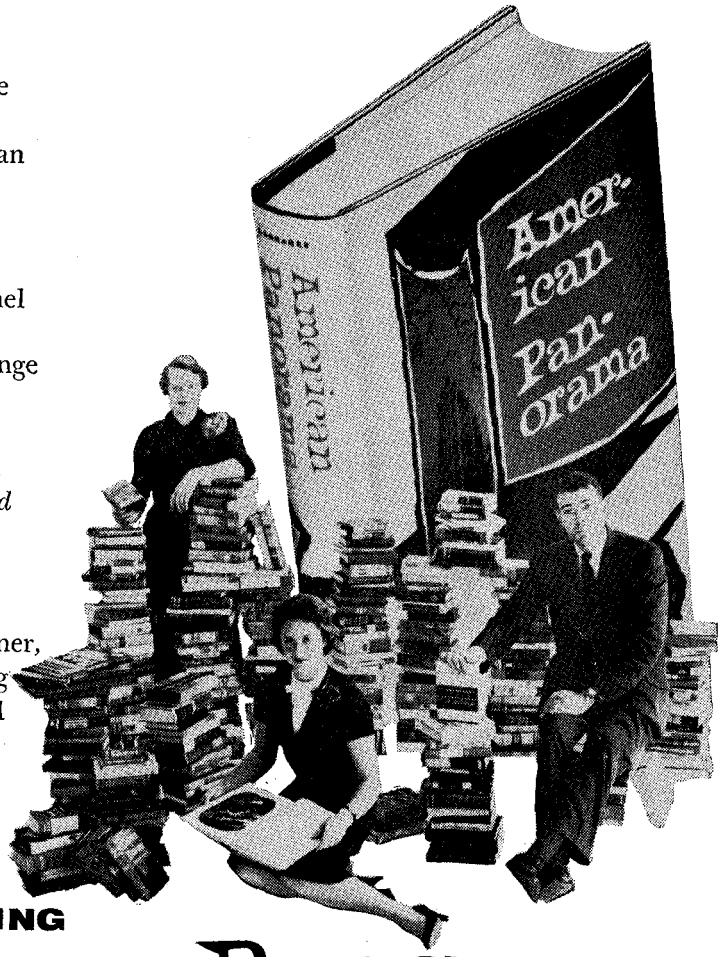

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